

# mOthering

*an animated interactive installation/film*

concept/direction/design by  
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*mOthering* is an interactive animated installation/film exploring motherhood as the sensual, metaphysical, and metaphorical encounter between Self and Other, a spectacle of creation and erasure.

A meditation on matrescence through the image of the mother-as-mirror – and a mirror-image inversion of Freudian/Lacanian theories of infant individuation – *mOthering* envisions the maternal body as a site of private transformation and public illusion, a lens through which to project a wild future in which such sensual encounters with the Other may be universalised as an essential human experience.

*mOthering* is conceived in dual formats: both a touch-input interactive piece intended for physical installation and exhibition, and a companion short film that adapts its content for linear screening.



## THE INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE *(four 2-4 minute vignettes)*

You stand in a warmly-lit space awash in a soft, vibrational soundscape. Surrounding you are alluring and strange sculptural objects: fragments of imagined geometries, figural abstractions, and biophilic forms. In the middle of this space stands a tall frame, suggestive of an open doorway or, perhaps, a mirror. And indeed on either side of this portal, two large screens are turned back-to-back, like opposite faces of a mirrored reflection. The space feels liminal and mysterious, even ritualistic, but the invitation is simple: *touch*.

What unfolds is a work of interactive animated art. Its hand-drawn visuals are composed from multiple animated loops, which are layered in rhythmic, ever-cycling compositions (think classic experimental films like Zbigniew Rybczynski's *Tango*, through contemporary examples like Boris Labbé's *La Chute*). Touch input drives the evolution and complexity of these repeating visual/audio cycles through a progression of 4 vignettes, like stanzas of a visual poem: figures at different scales, undulating in harmony or straining in opposition, mirroring, multiplying, and metamorphosing in richly layered choreography.

The 'object' of the interaction is to (re)create and (re)cycle the individual/intergenerational/institutional/mythical dimensions of motherhood as a choreography of Self and Other – of Self *which is also* Other – to aesthetically experience maternal identity in what Judith Butler calls ritualised production. It can be played alone or with a partner, reflecting ever-shifting relational dynamics, permutations of self/child/world, that shape maternal experience.

While pregnant people and mothers may seem its most obvious audience, as Jacqueline Rose writes, "not only motherhood is impoverished if it fails to connect to the wider world." *mOthering* transcends demographics, inviting all people into the fold of maternal experience as an essential human encounter with the Other, a biological and social technology of change. The intuitiveness and immediacy of its gestural inputs encourage experimentation and loose play, while both animation and interaction hold broad visceral appeal – in particular to children, who become drivers of (male) parental engagement.

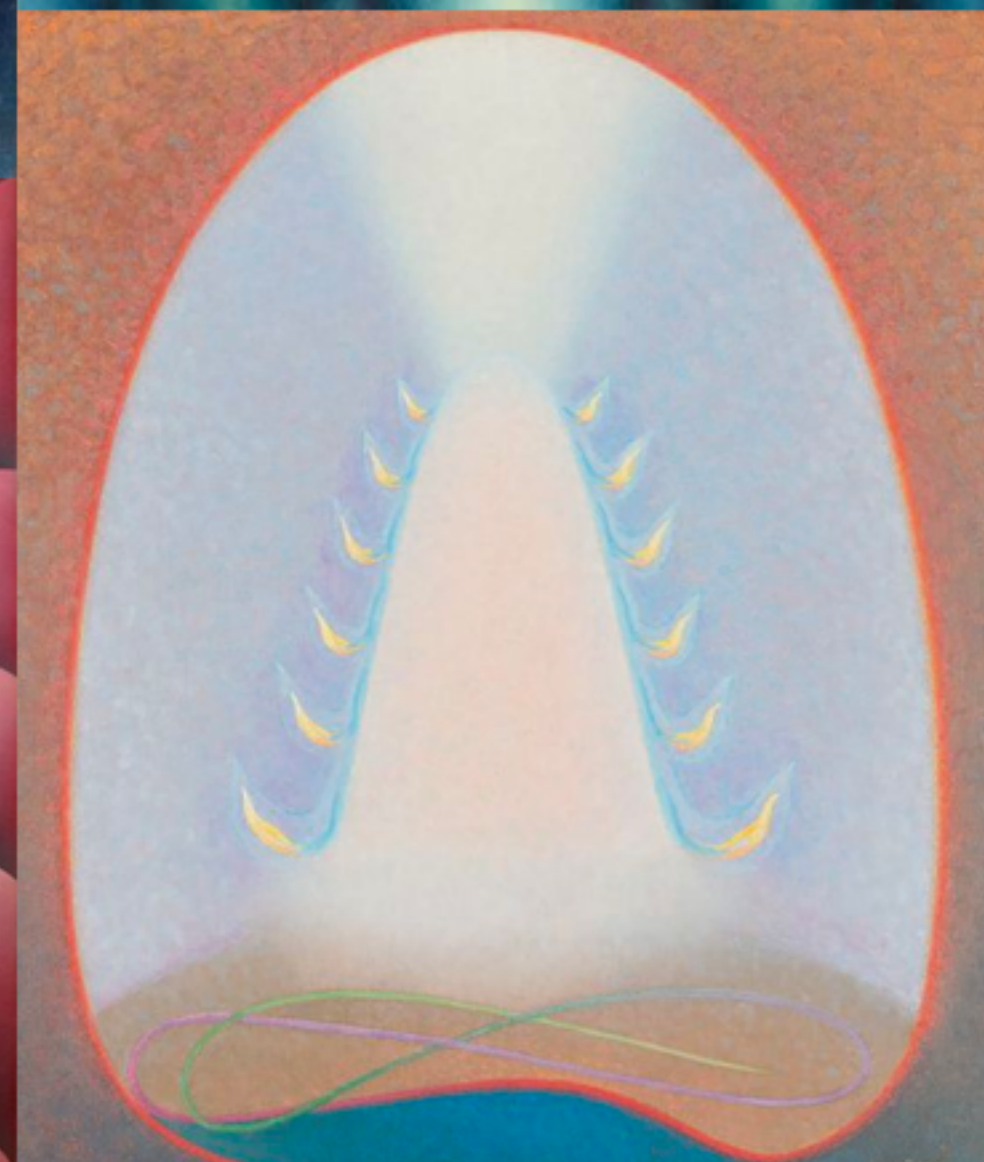
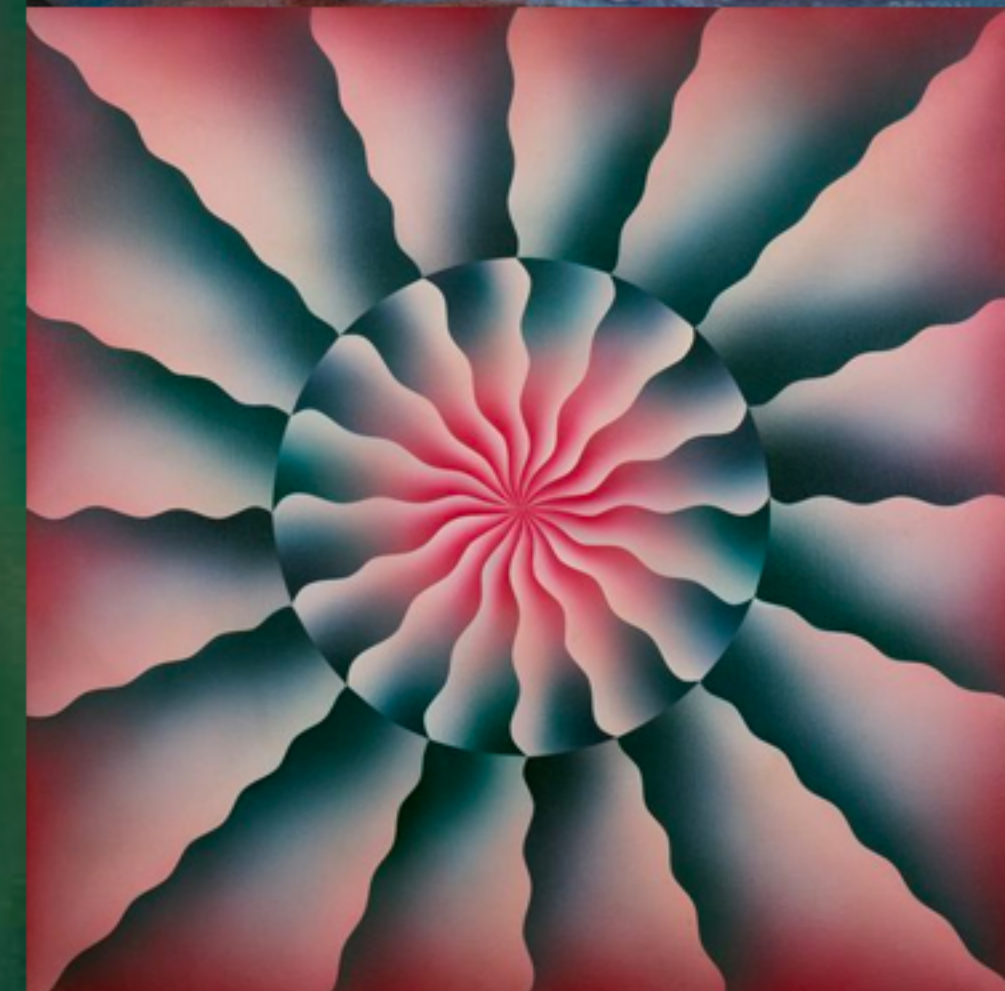
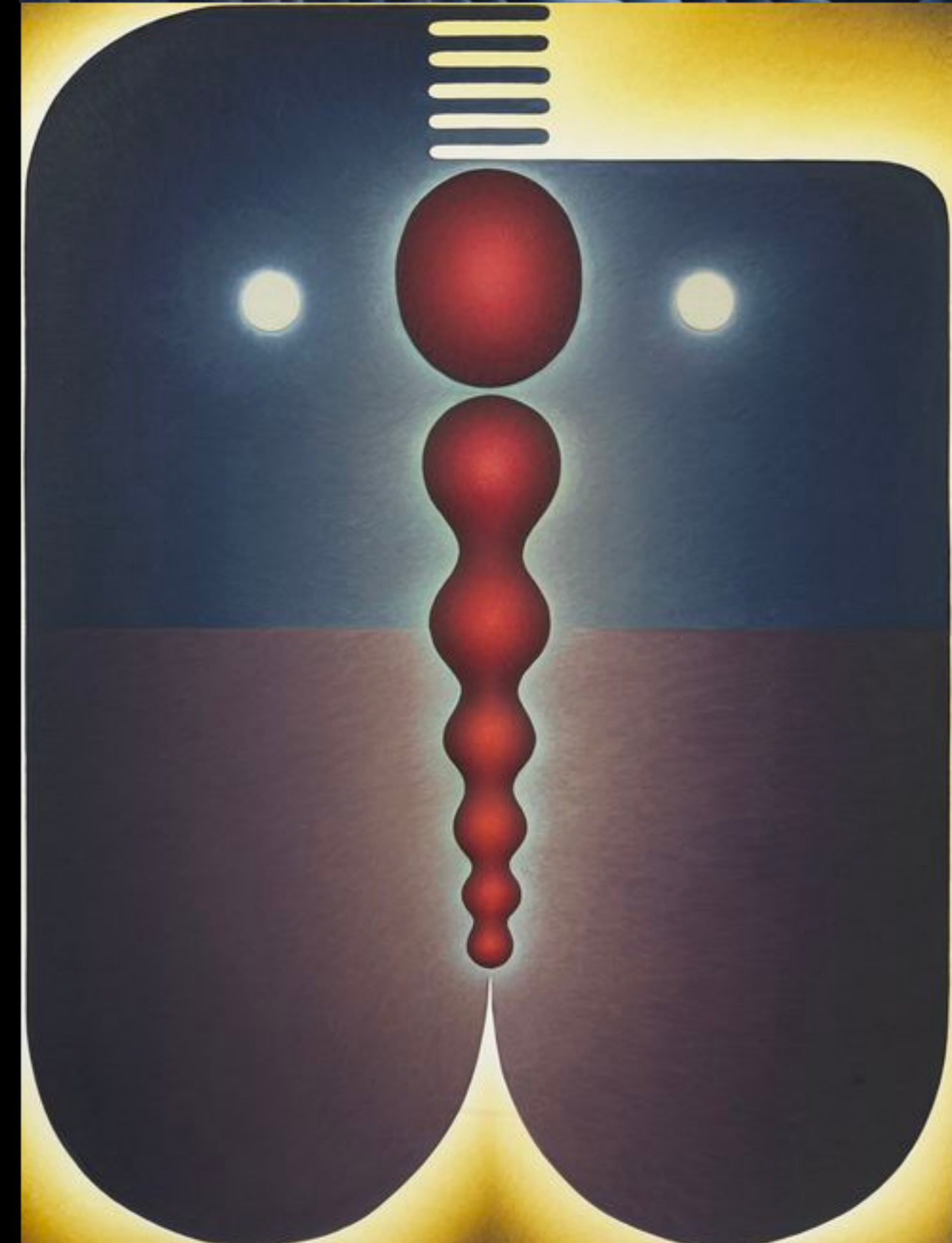
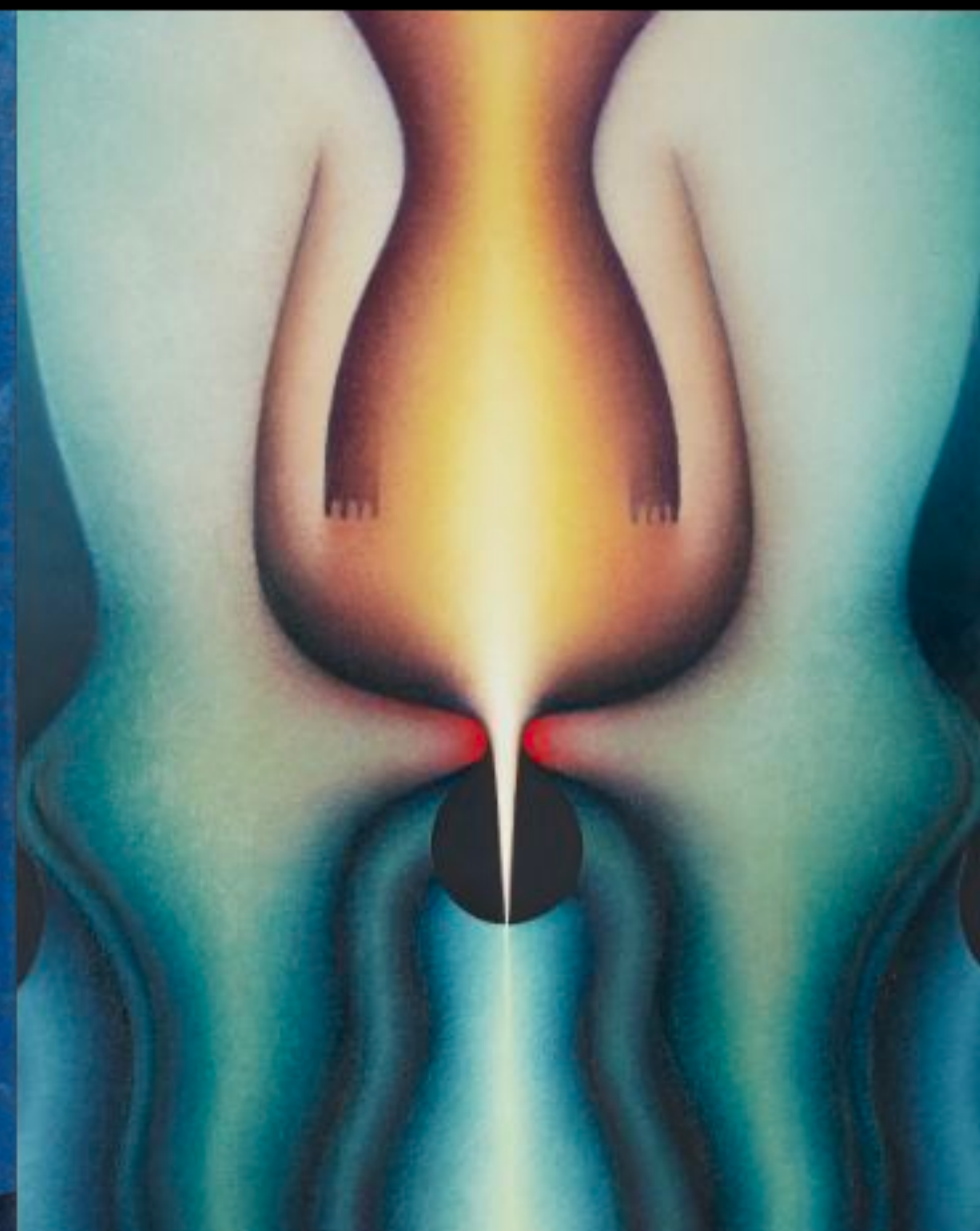


### THE FILM *(4-5 minutes)*

The companion short film takes these same animated cycles as its raw material, arranging them in thoughtfully edited linear progression. It may accompany the interactive experience, thus extending its accessibility to audiences who could not otherwise participate, or be shown as a standalone piece, thus amplifying the project's reach into film/animation festivals and other non-interactive screening formats.

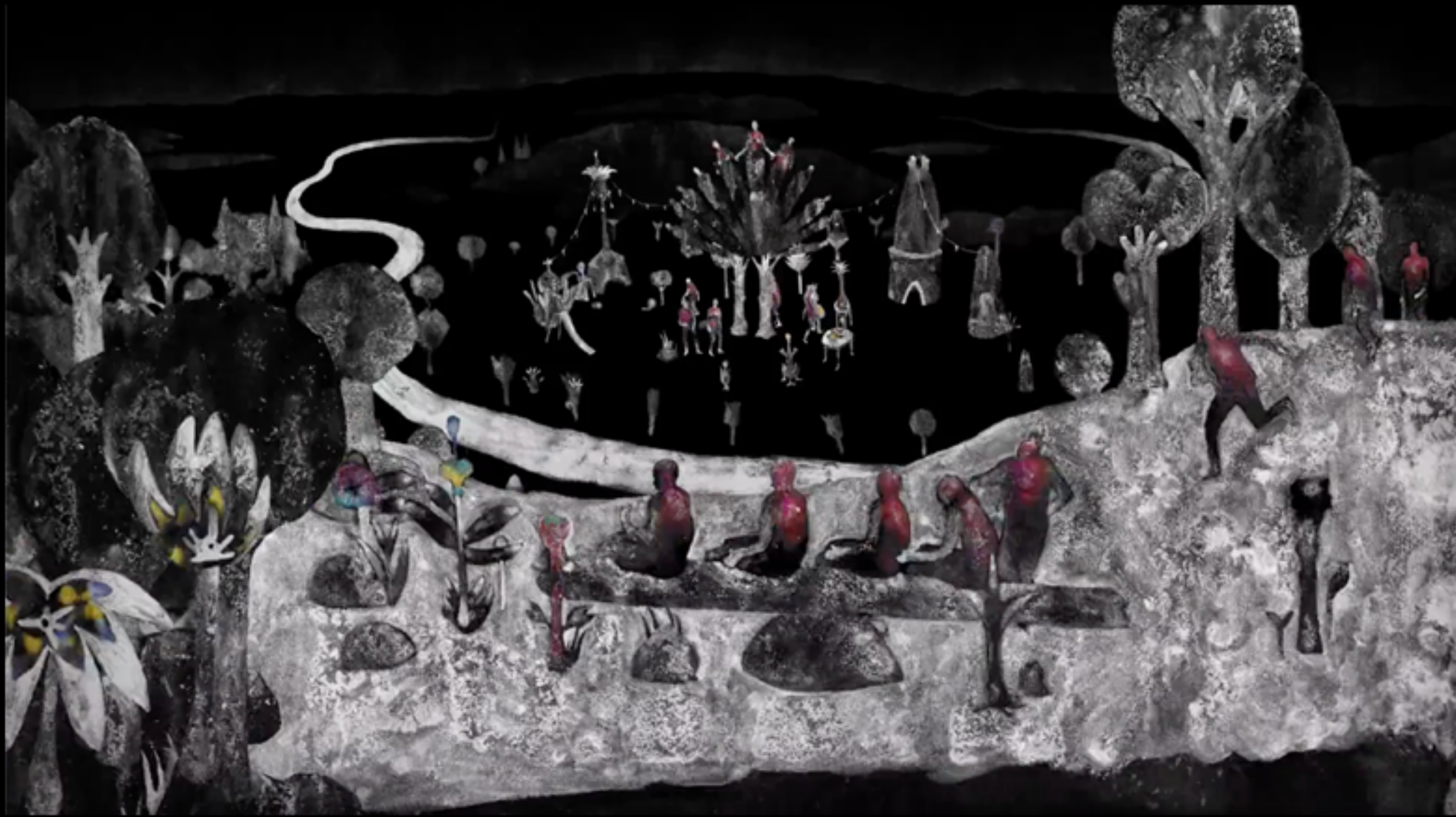
# VISUAL DESIGN

*mOthering* blends abstracted and figural imagery, rooted in the human body and its processes. Simplified shape language and soft gradient colors draw inspiration from feminist painters like Loie Hollowell, Judy Chicago, and Agnes Pelton, whose works are reproduced below.

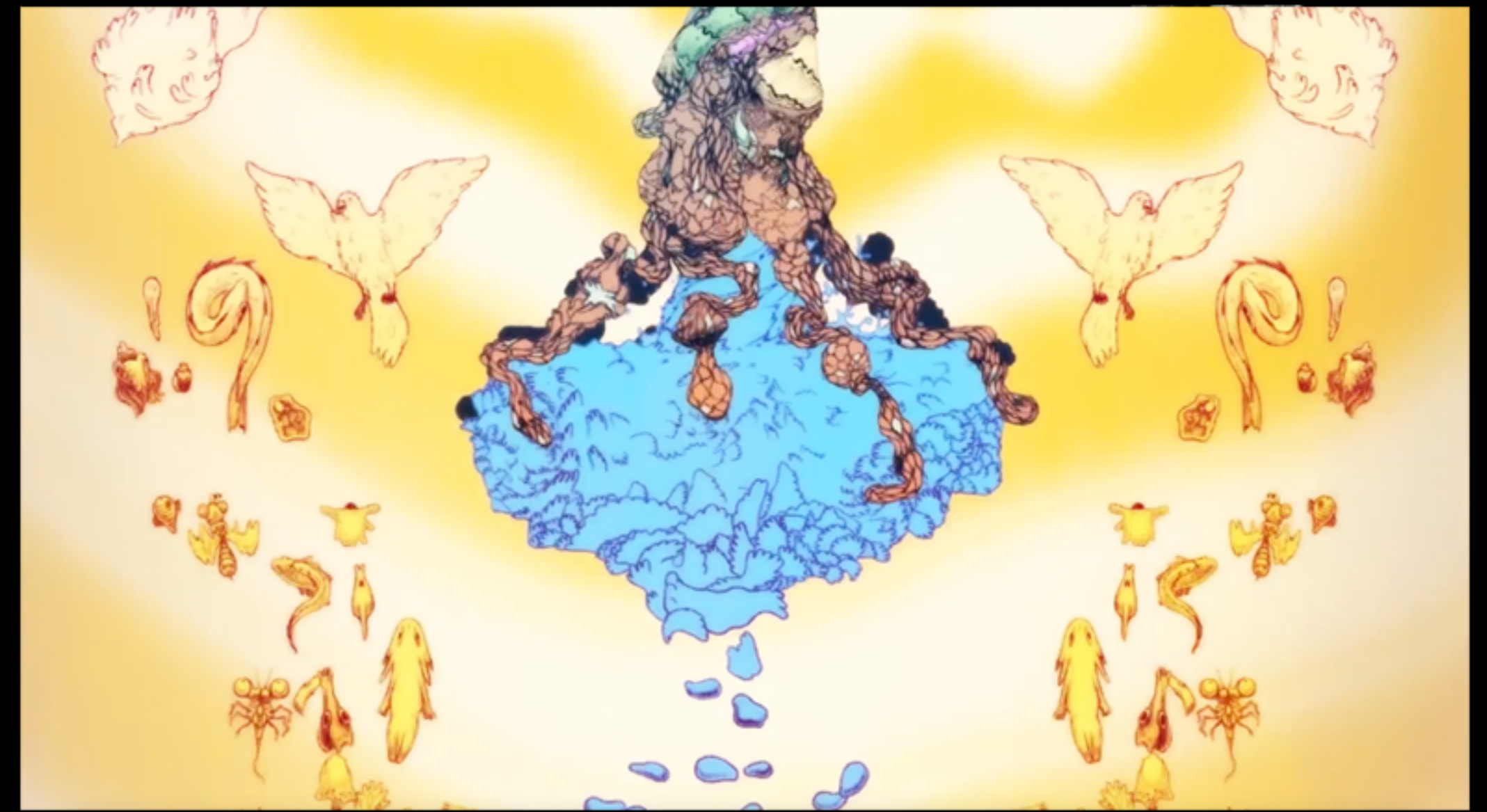


# MOTION DESIGN

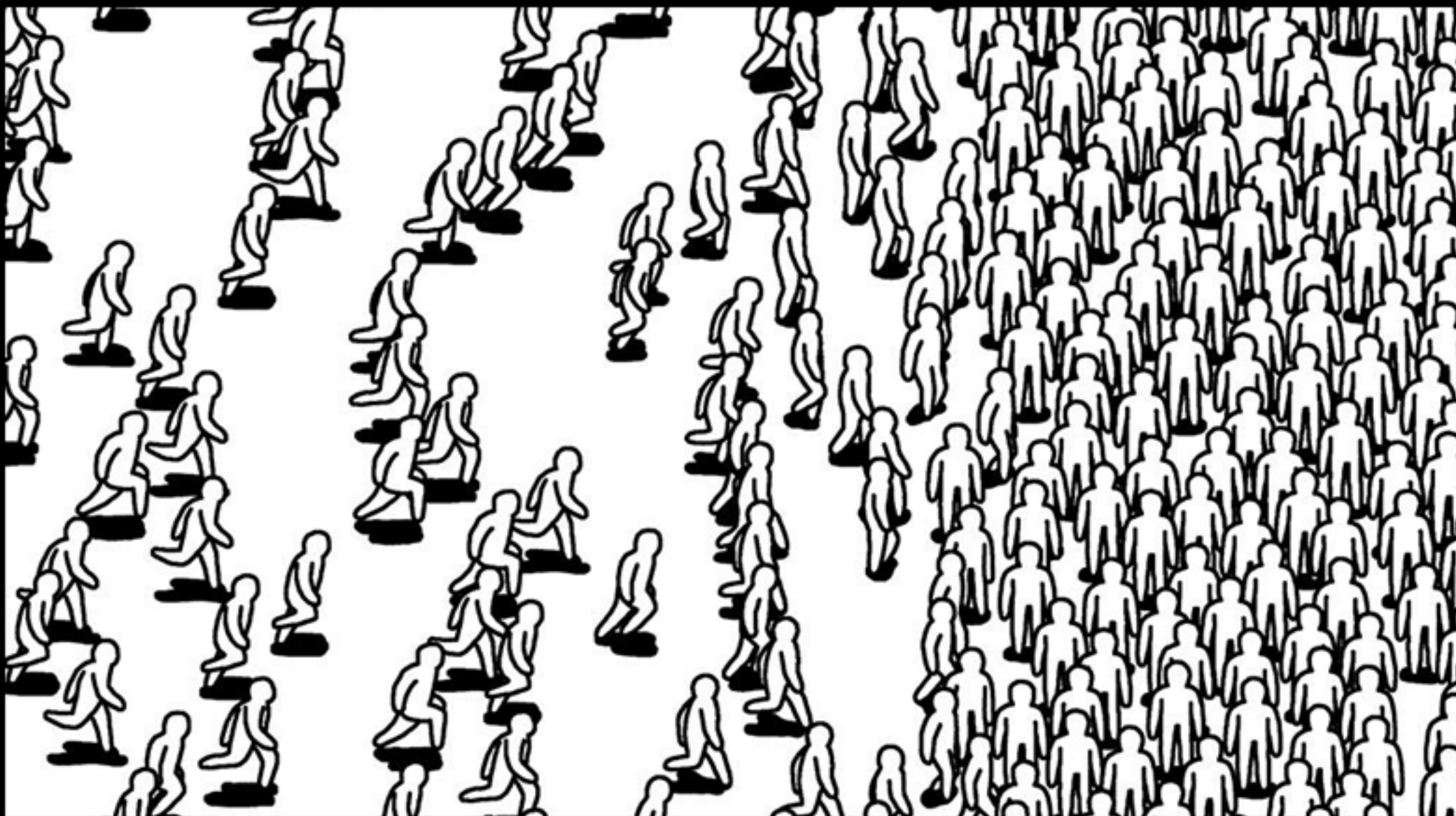
The animation uses layered cycles and repeated/repeating elements to surreal, sensual, and at times unsettling effect, as in the works below.



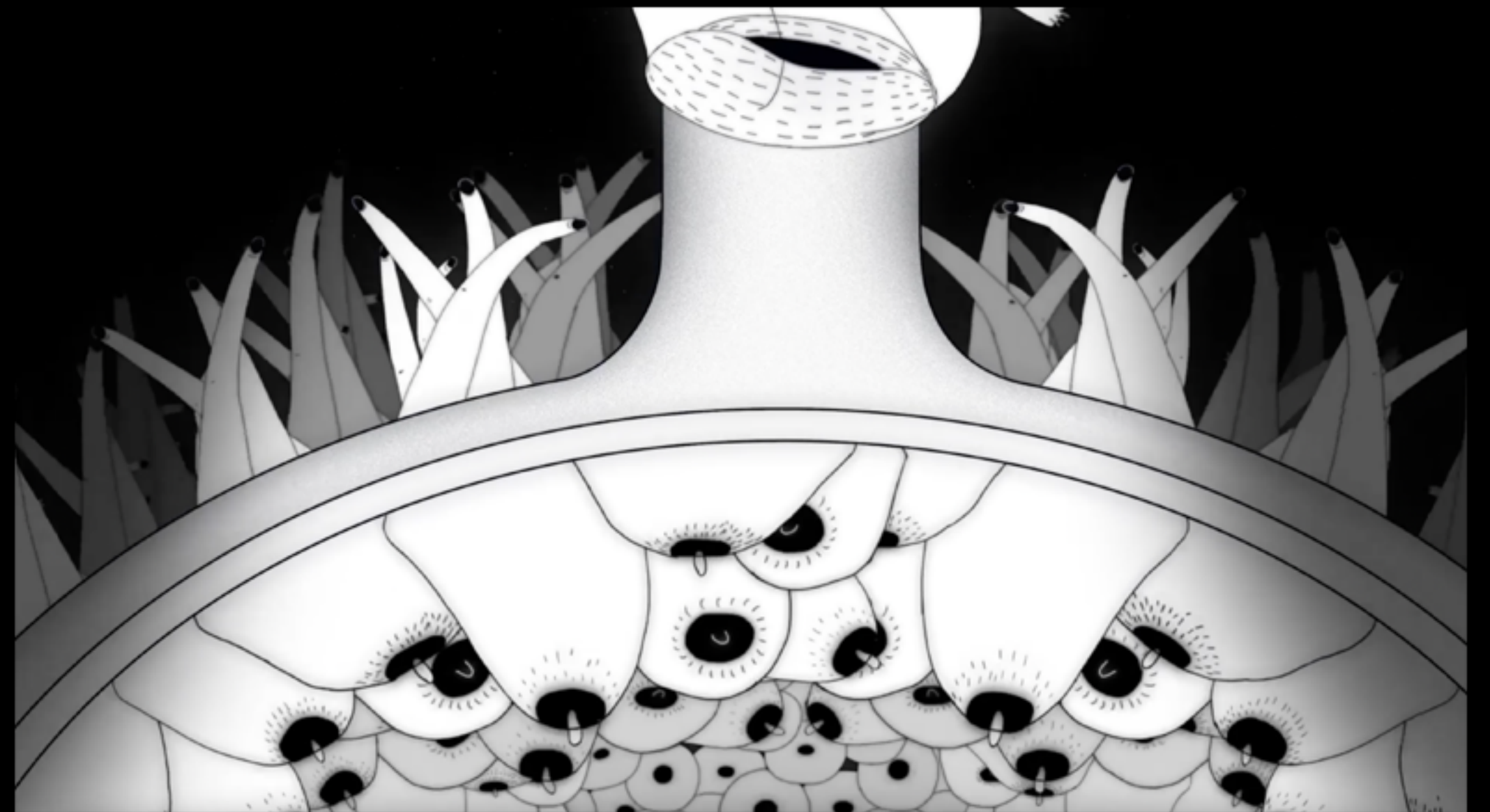
"La Chute" – Boris Labbe



"TOTEM" – Caleb Wood



"KIDS" – Mario von Rickenbach & Michael Frei



"Egg" – Martina Scarpelli

## SPATIAL & SOUND DESIGN

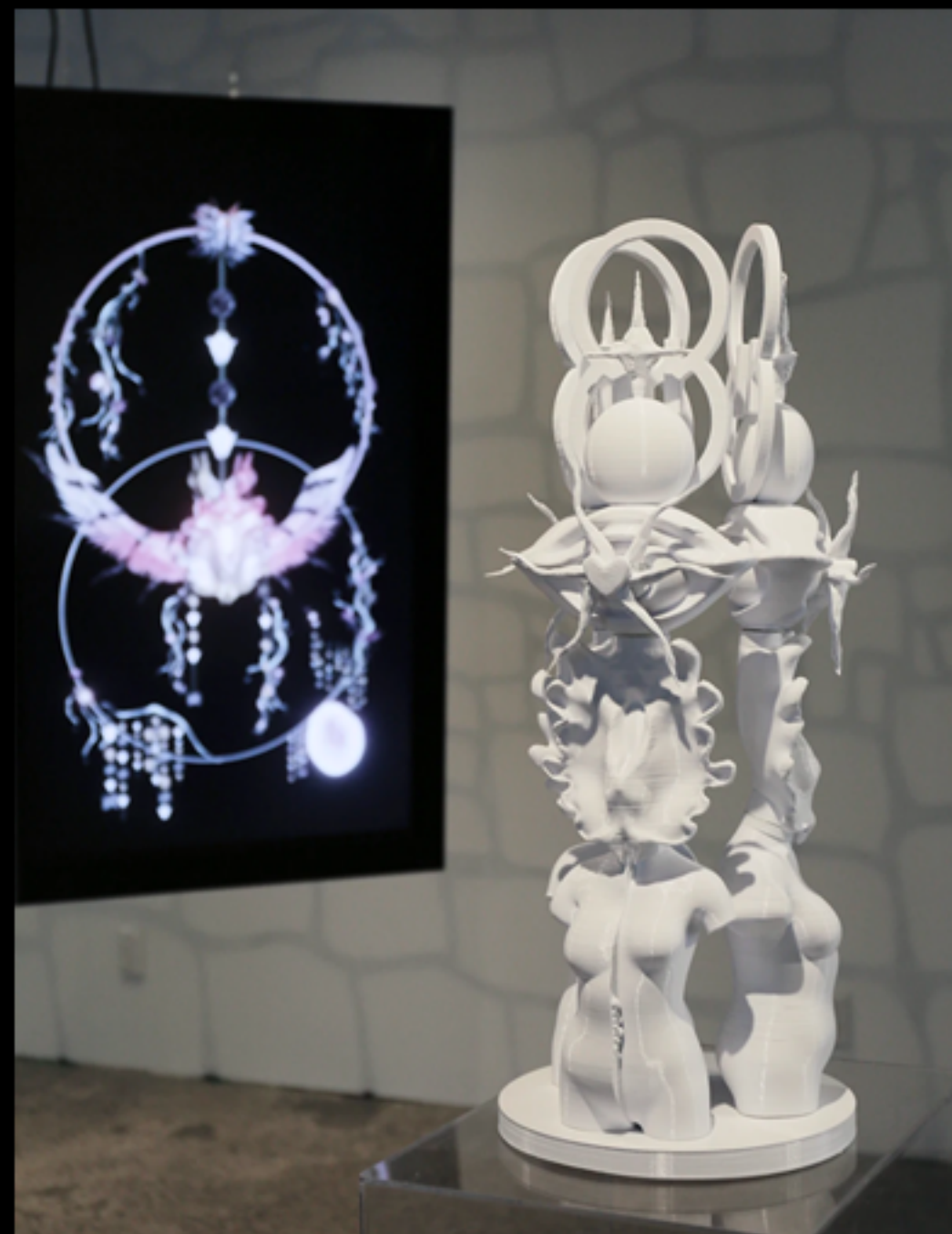
Strange and alluring, the installation evokes a liminal space of mutual reflection and ritualised communion. Sculptural objects inhabit the space, reifying elements of *mOthering*'s animated loops as tangible fragments of imagined geometries, figural abstractions, and biophilic forms. A dimensional, ambient soundscape hums all around, creating an audio canvas upon which the user's input paints layered sound loops.

As the first impression upon the audience, the spatial and sound design of the installation is its key framing device. It must not only invite, but convince the audience to cross the threshold into the *mOthering* experience. Its call must be especially powerful given the social baggage that motherhood carries, a nexus of both externalised and internalised misogyny that obscures and resists its reflective power. The audience must feel compelled to explore, experiment, and discover, creaking open the door to an unexpected and intimate encounter.

The final presentation layout of *mOthering* will be conceived in consideration/collaboration with its exhibition space(s).



"Andromedan Sad Girl" – Tai Shani



"Ritual of Subject" – Xi Li



"The Cells" – Louise Bourgeois



"The Cells" – Louise Bourgeois



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Laura Emel Yilmaz is an award-winning director, designer, and experimental animator working across animation, motion design, and interactive media. Her commercial work has garnered top prizes at the Emmys, Clio Awards, ADC Awards, Telly Awards, and Hollywood A-list awards, and was nominated for a Cristal at Annecy International Animation Film Festival in 2022. Her personal short films have screened at renowned film, animation, and experimental festivals across five continents, including Animafest Zagreb, Ann Arbor Film Festival, Seattle International Film Festival, DOK Leipzig, and Black Maria Film + Video Festival, where in 2012 her film “Places Other People Have Lived” took top prize in animation and toured over 70 locations across 20 US states.

Laura is an alumna of the Sundance New Frontier Story Lab, the Swedish independent games accelerator/residency Stugan, and frequently serves on the Visual Art jury for GDC’s prestigious Independent Games Festival. In 2022, Laura was a featured filmmaker in Screen Wellington/UNESCO City of Film’s “Diverse Voices” campaign, which provided seed funding for *mOthering*. She holds an MFA from University of Southern California’s School of Cinematic Arts, an AB from Harvard University, and is the former Programme Director of Animation at Victoria University of Wellington.



## IN-KIND COLLABORATORS



Michael Fallik is an award-winning interactive producer. His credits include BAFTA 2018 Game of the Year “What Remains of Edith Finch” (Giant Sparrow/Annapurna Interactive), 2020 Apple Design Award winner “Where Cards Fall” (The Game Band/Snowman/Apple Arcade), “Lucky Luna” (Snowman/Netflix), and “FREE THE NIGHT VR” (Nicole McDonald/Jaunt/Microsoft).

He is an alum of the 2016 Stugan Accelerator/Residency, and the 2019 Sundance New Frontier Story Lab. His projects have been reviewed in The New York Times, The Washington Post, The New Yorker, Los Angeles Times, The Guardian, IGN, Polygon, Wired, and The Verge, among many others.



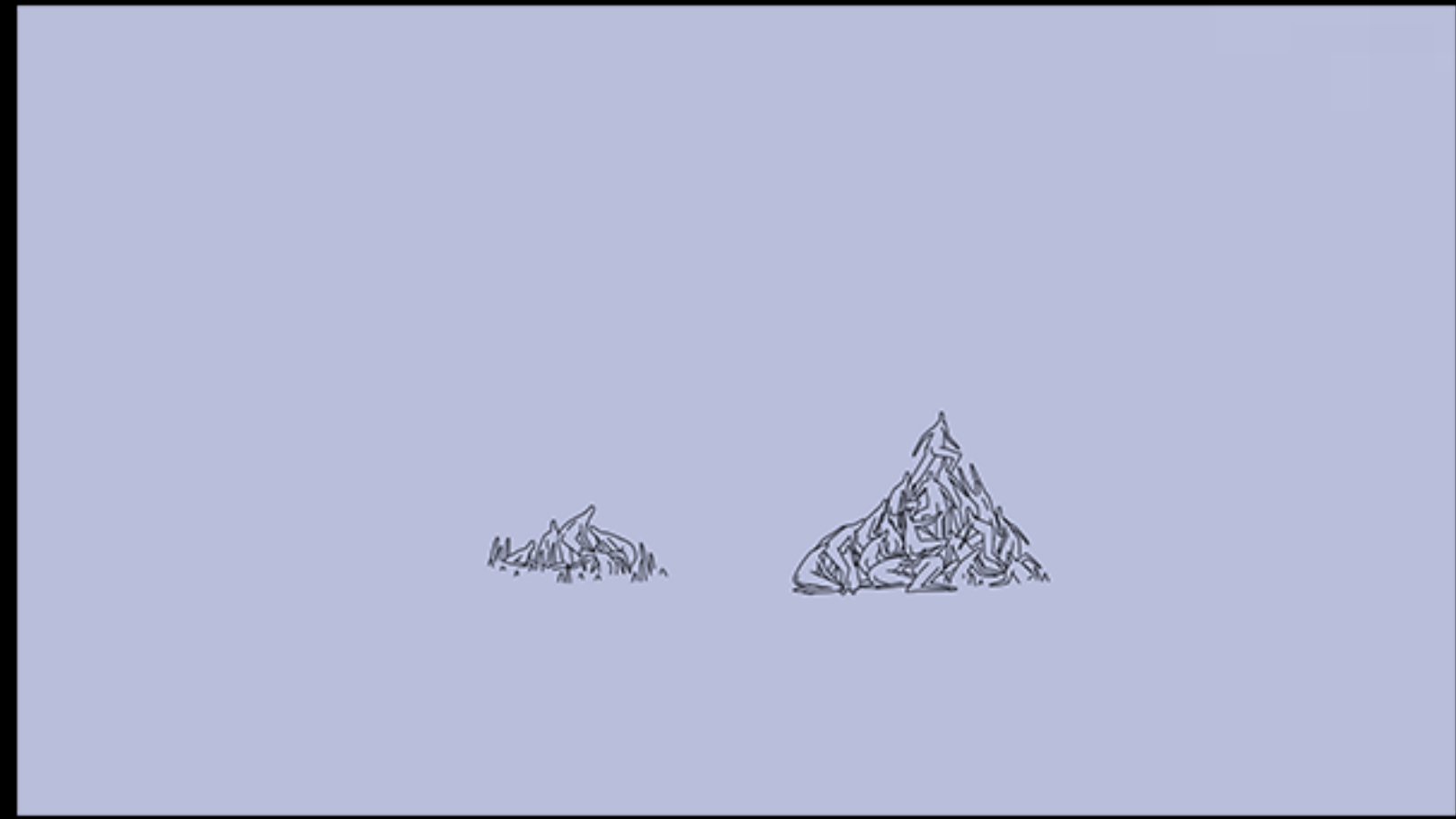
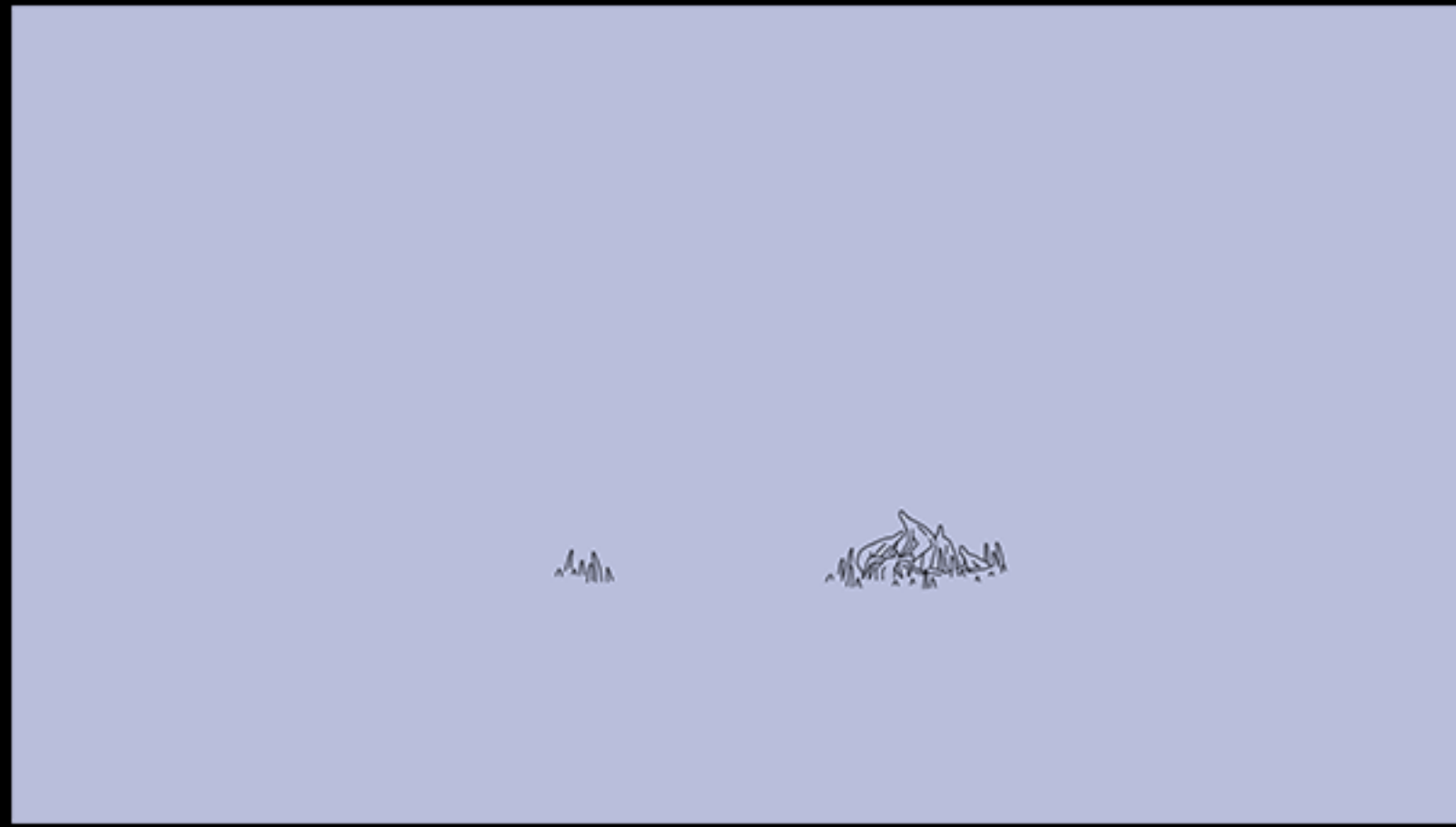
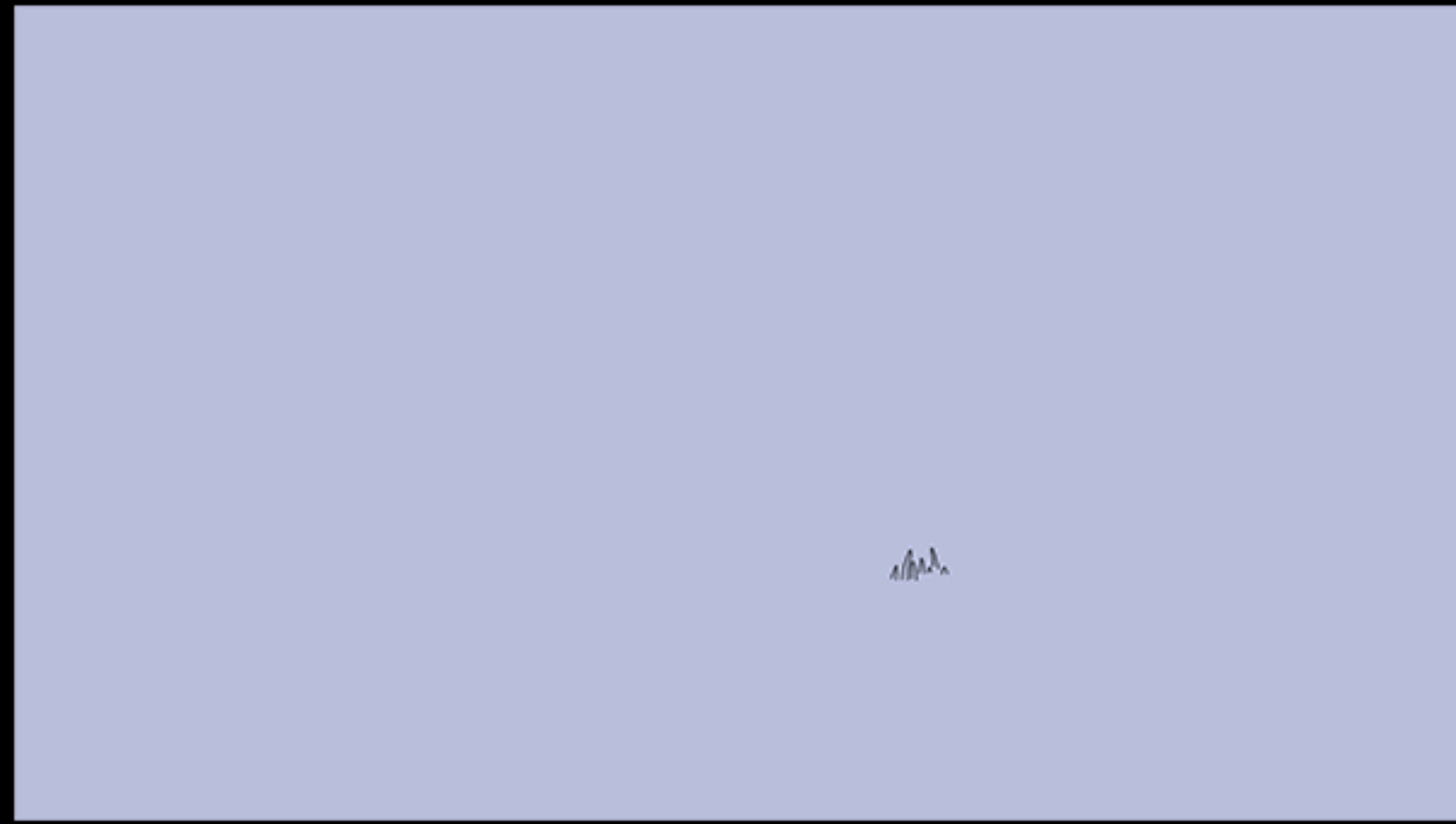
Richard Yandle is the founder of Madorium, LLC, a cross-platform interactive development studio founded in 2016 that is based in the US and the UK. As a collective, Madorium offers decades of combined experience shipping high-quality products across multiple platforms, and provides services throughout the full development cycle, from concept to launch.

At Madorium, Richard’s many collaborators include software engineers, producers, animators, programmers, designers, artists, marketers, and audio experts. All are passionate about games and interactive media, and use their talent and skills to create experiences that hold a personal connection.

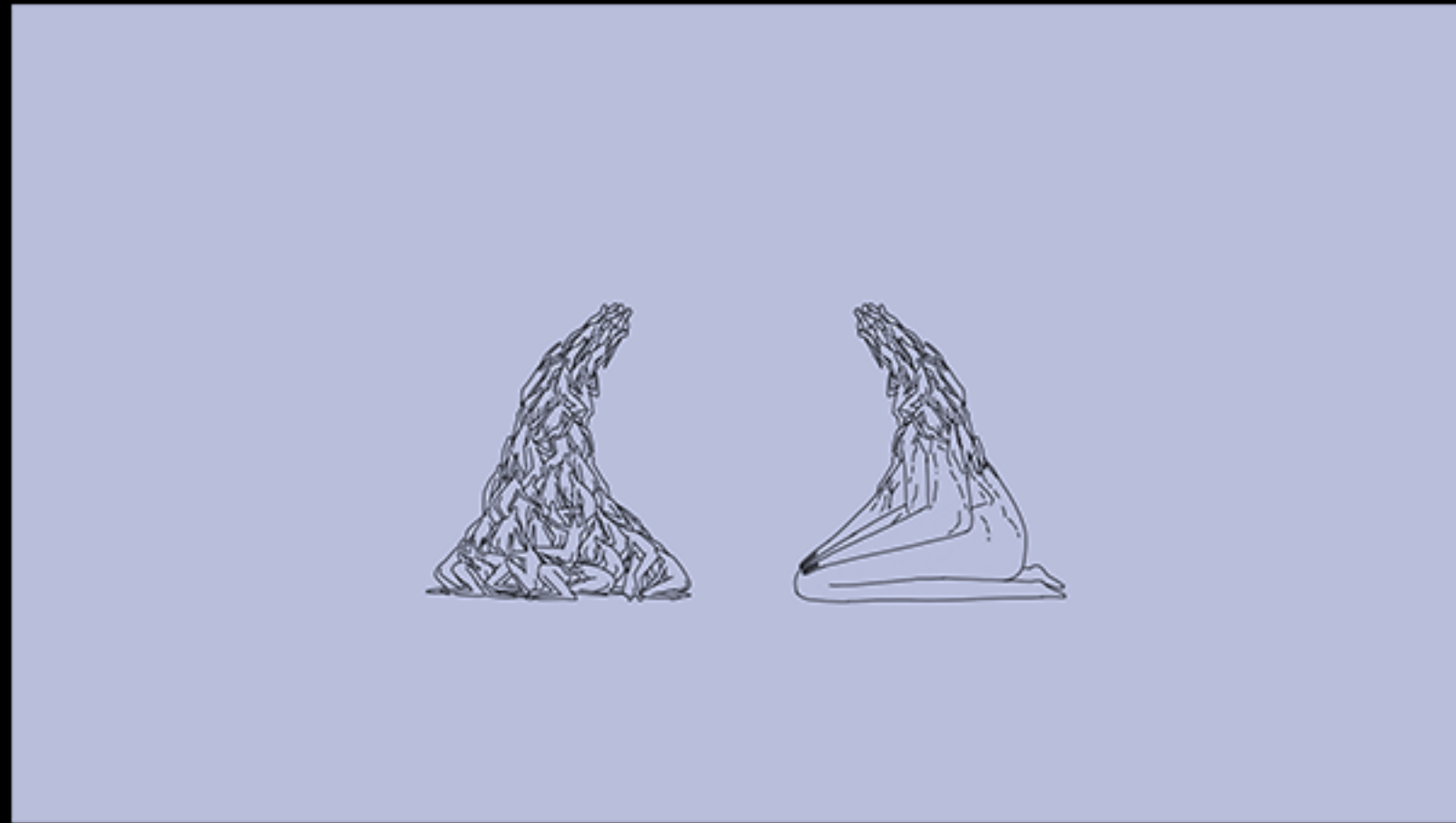
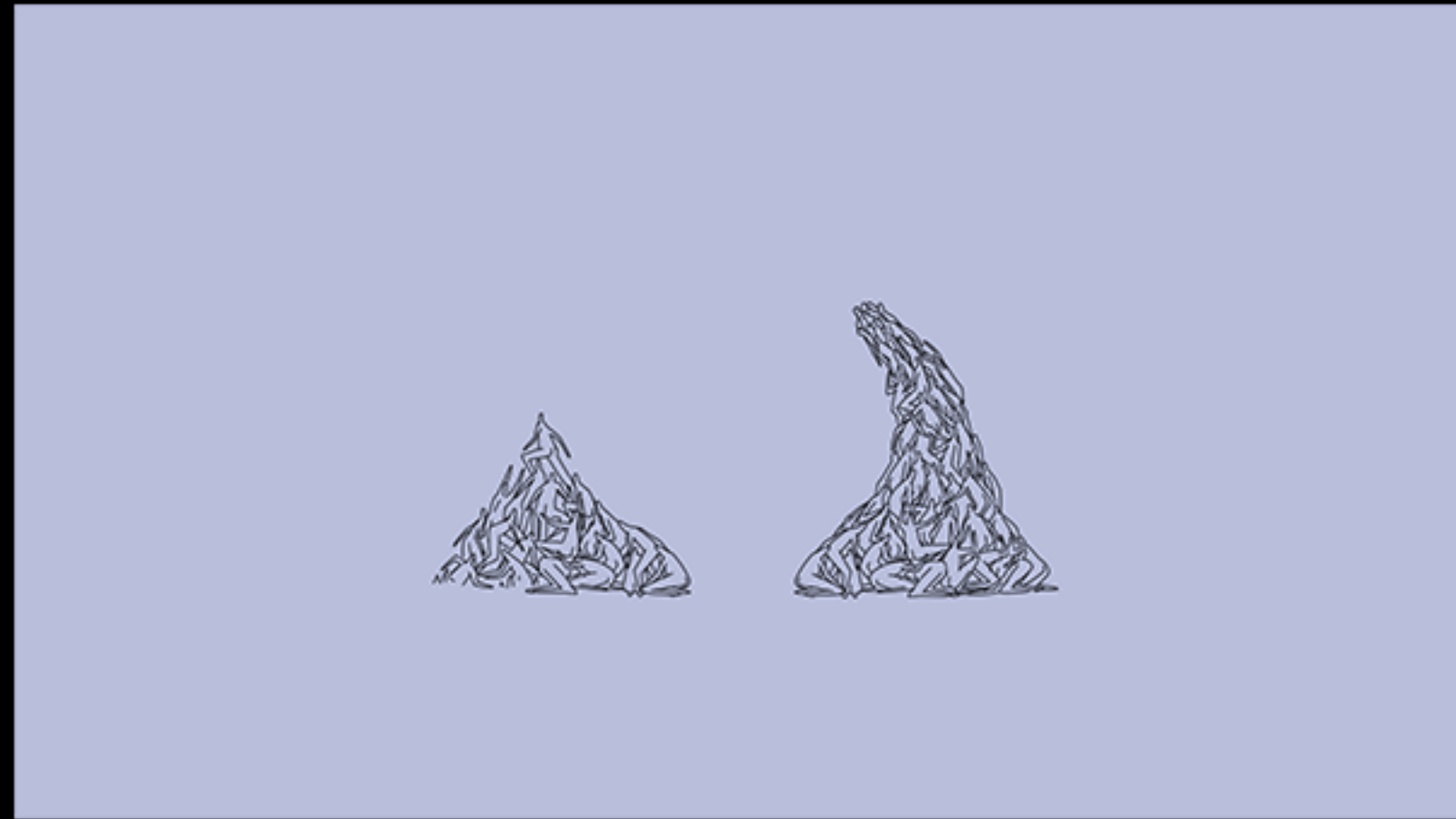
Sample Storyboard Sequence

# EXCERPT: THE MIRROR DANCE

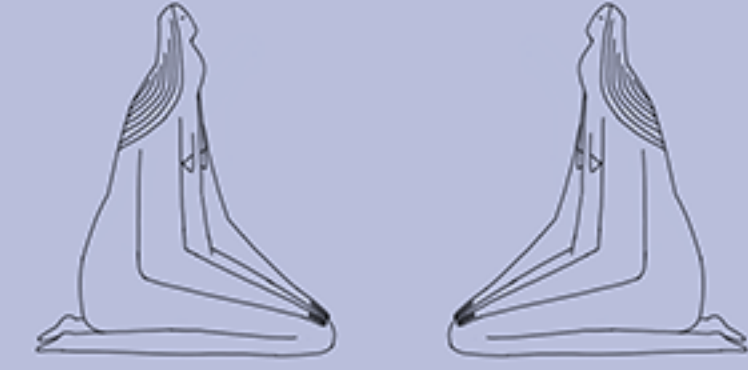
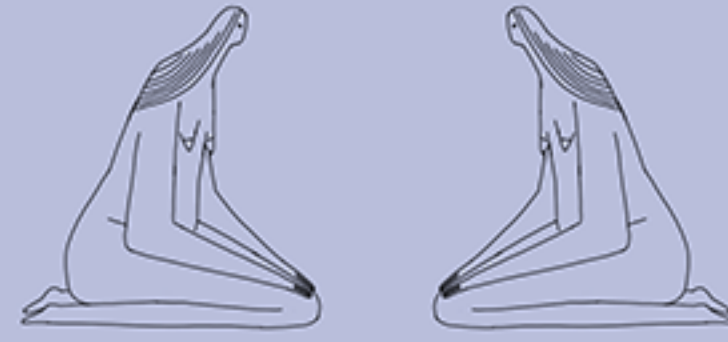
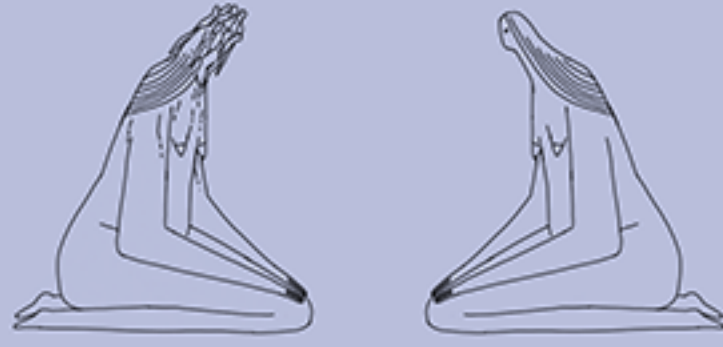




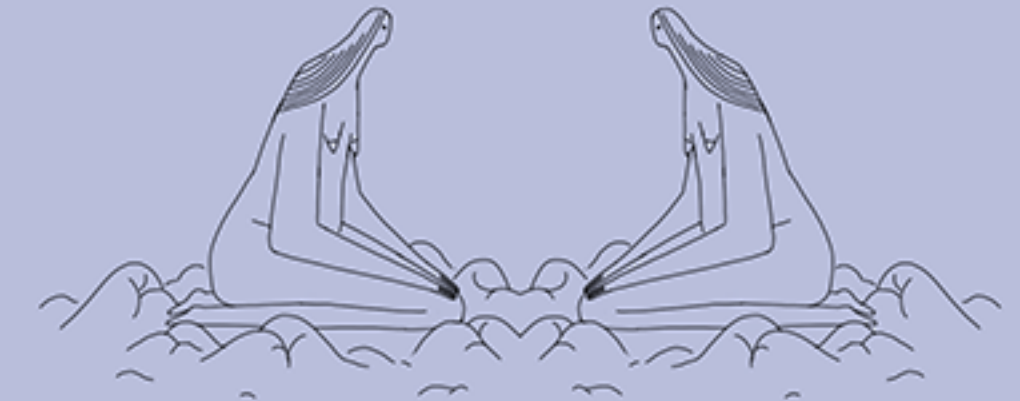
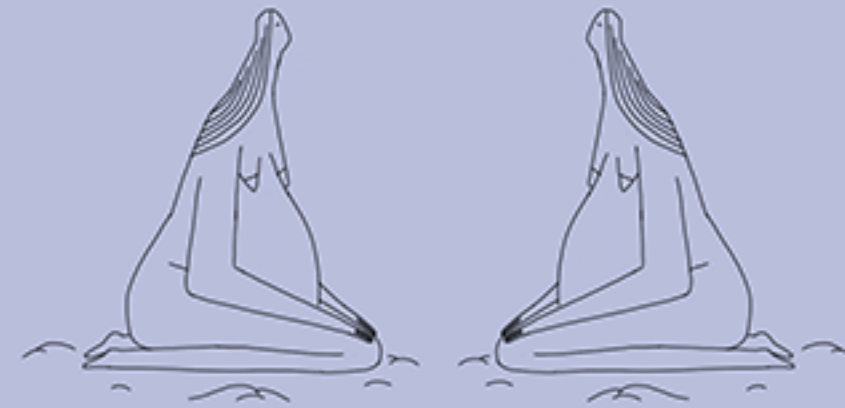
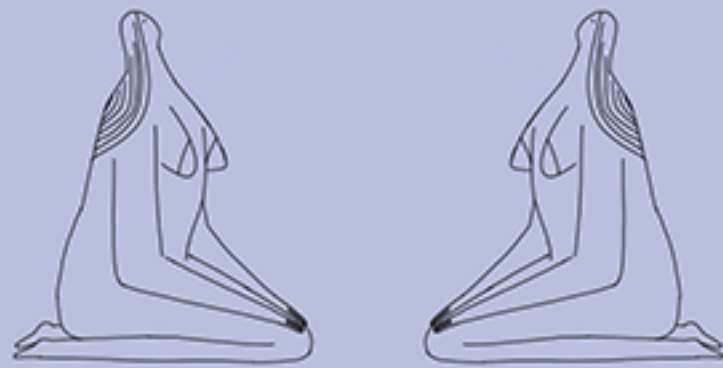
Wriggling shapes worm up through an invisible groundplane, revealing themselves to be tiny human figures. These are the little mothers. They pile up into two pillars...



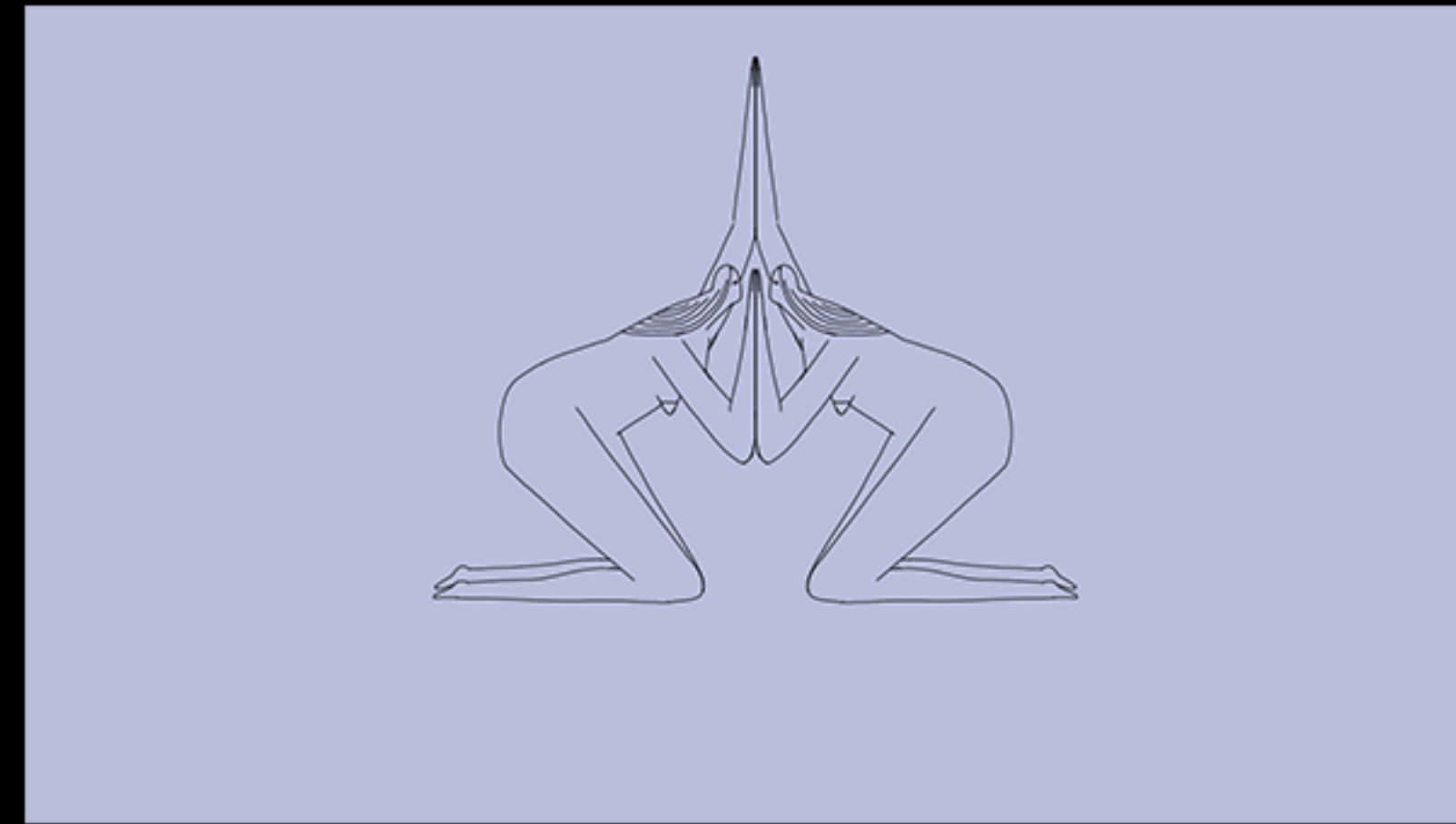
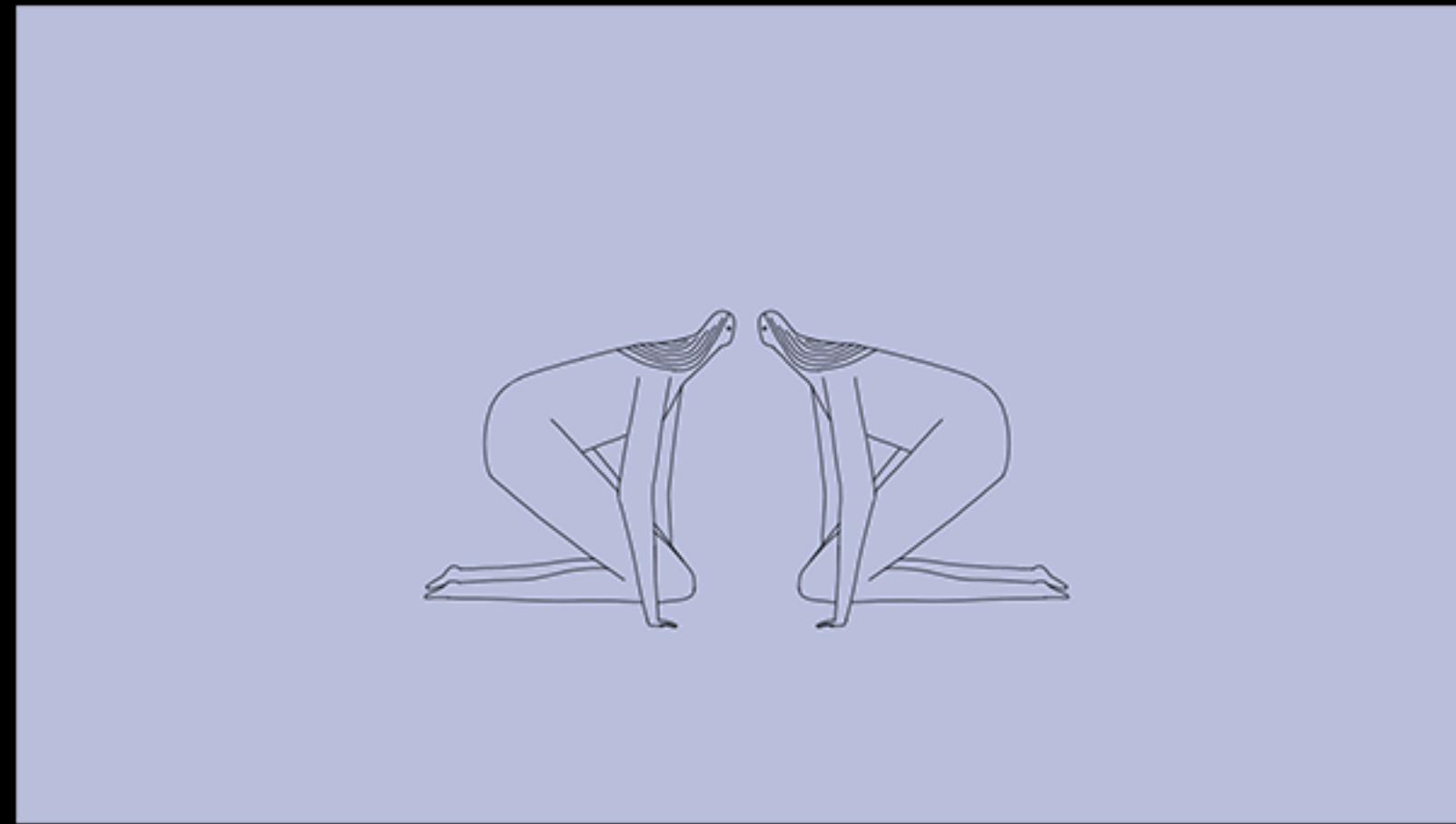
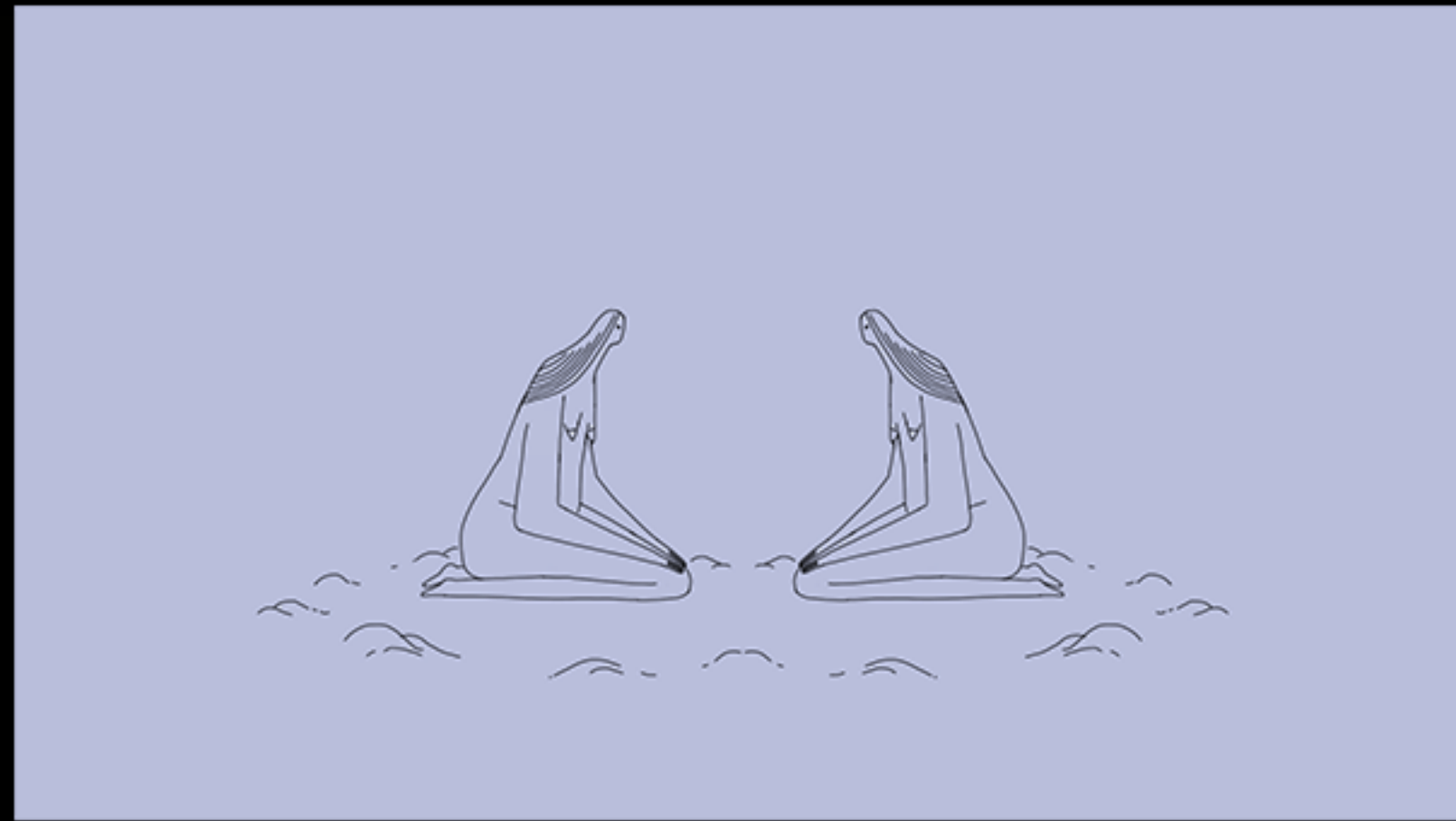
...and coalesce into two huge female forms, sitting across from one another. These are the Big Mothers.



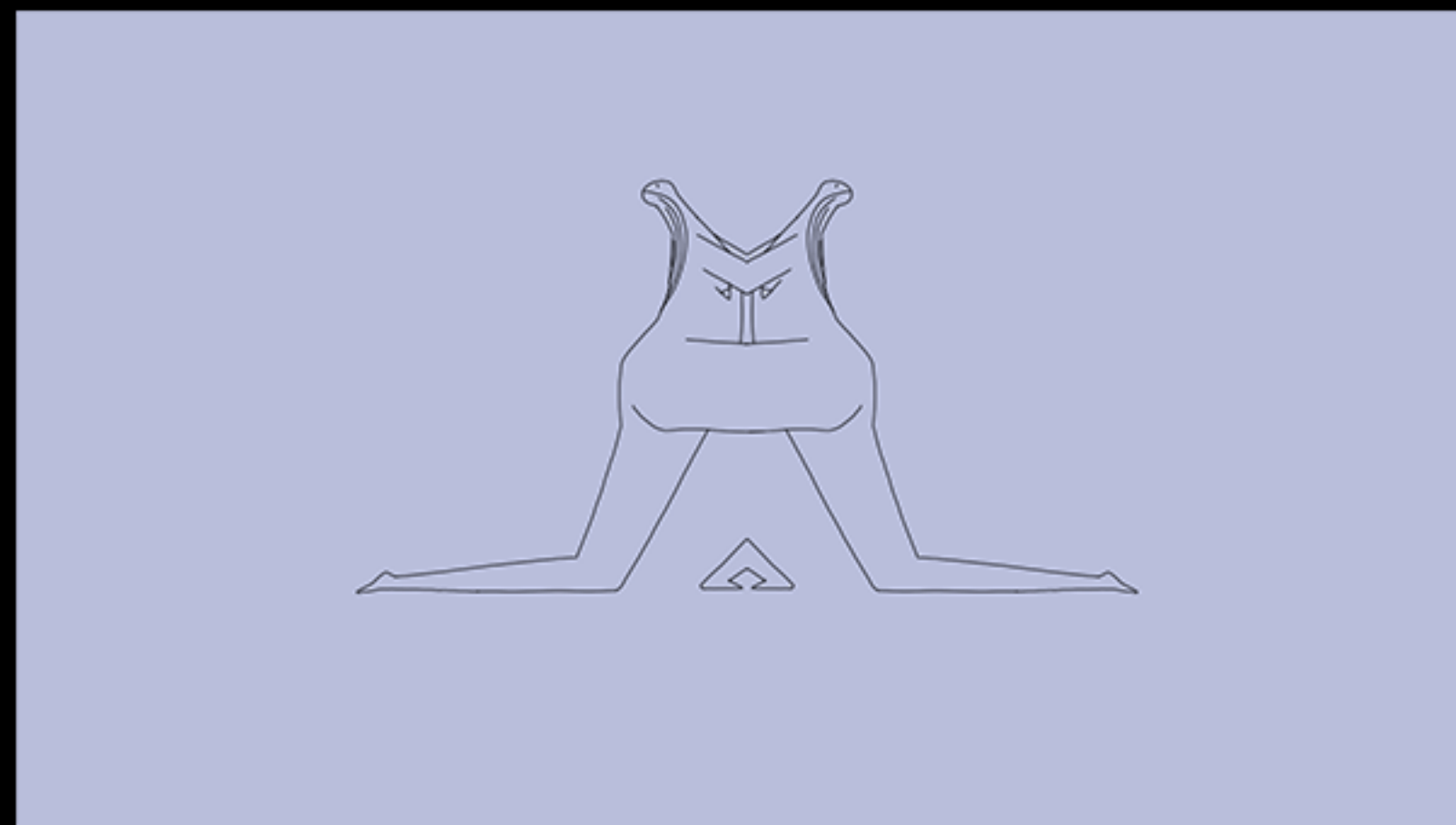
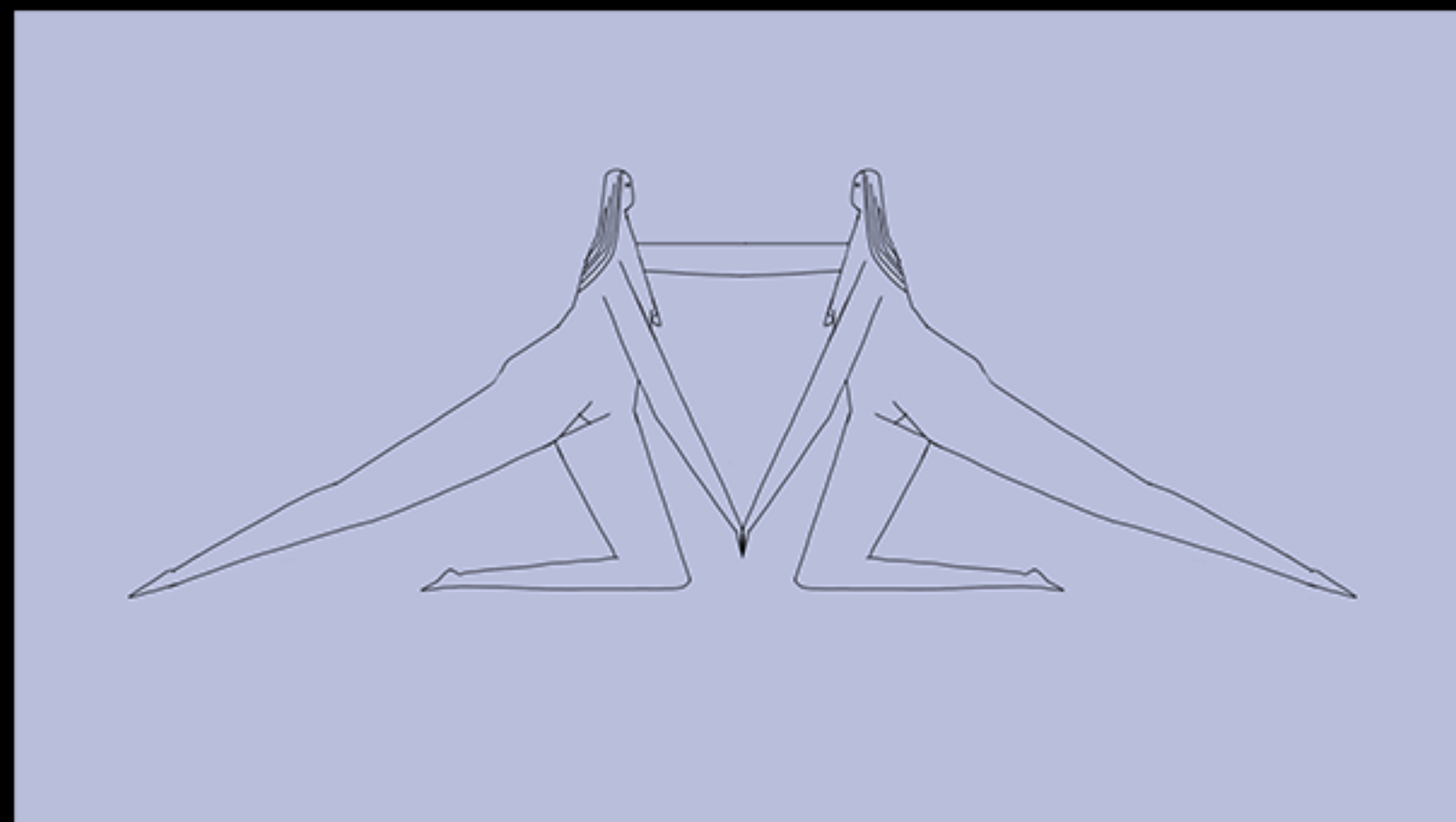
The Big Mothers take a deep breath...



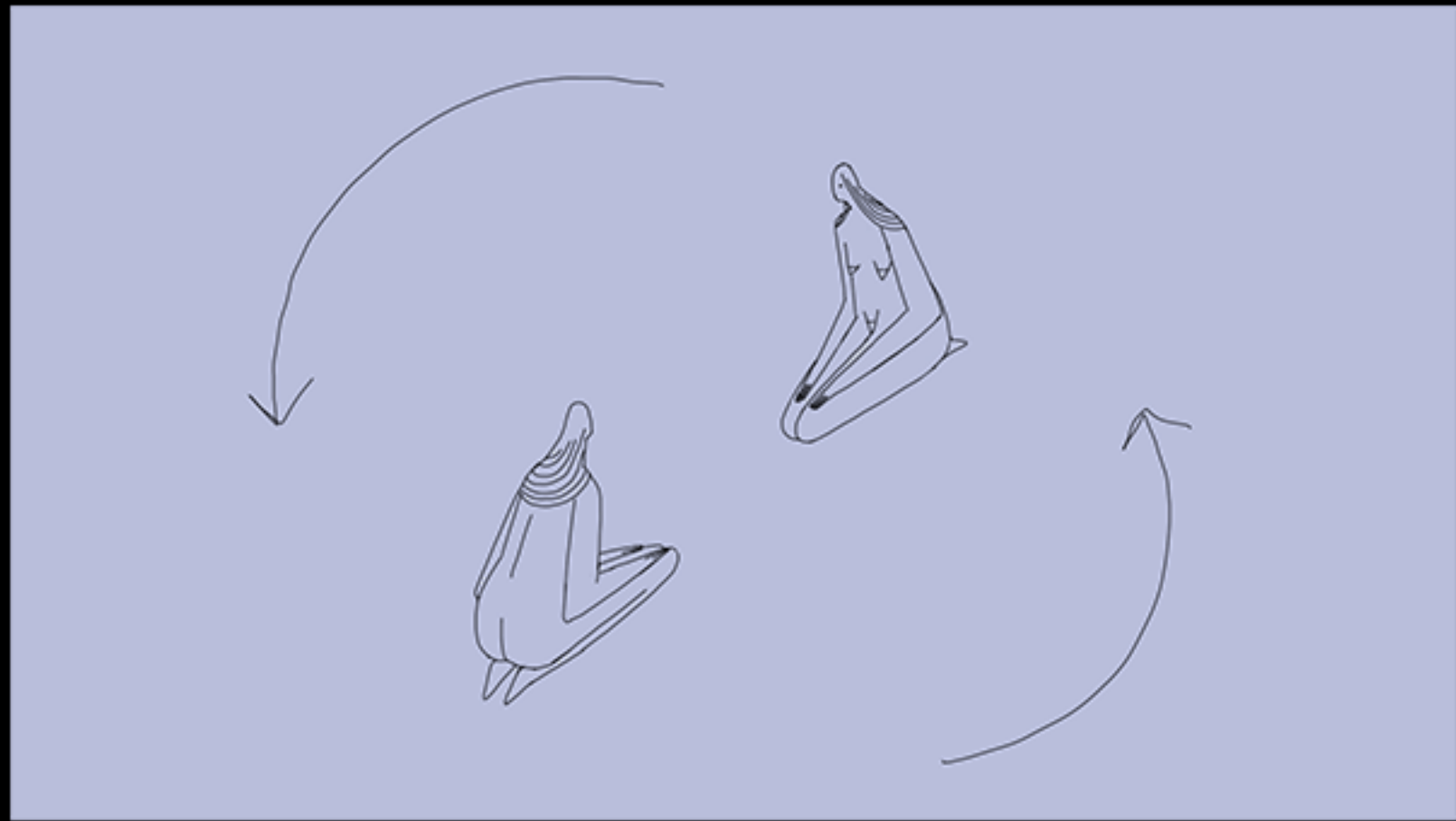
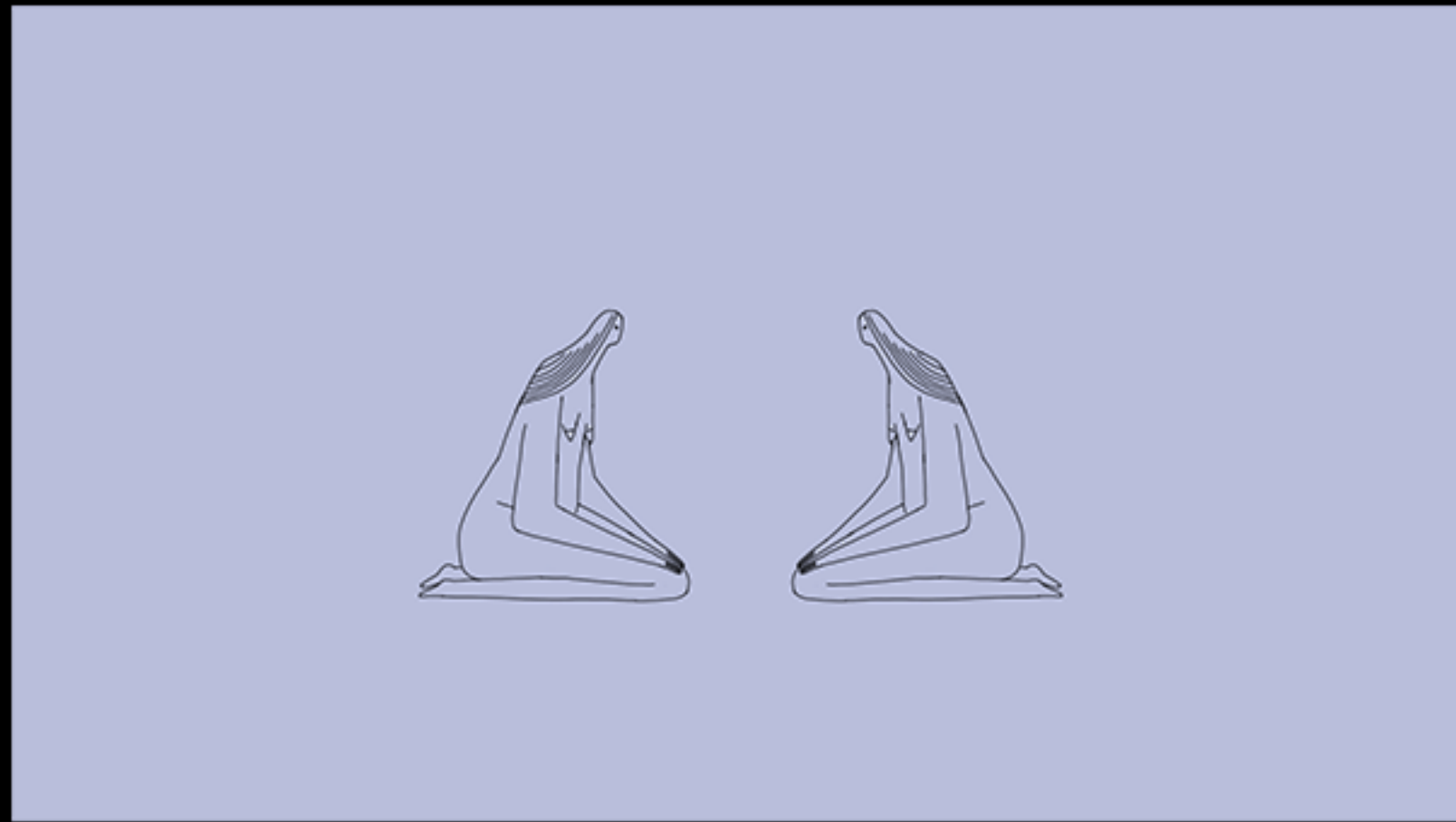
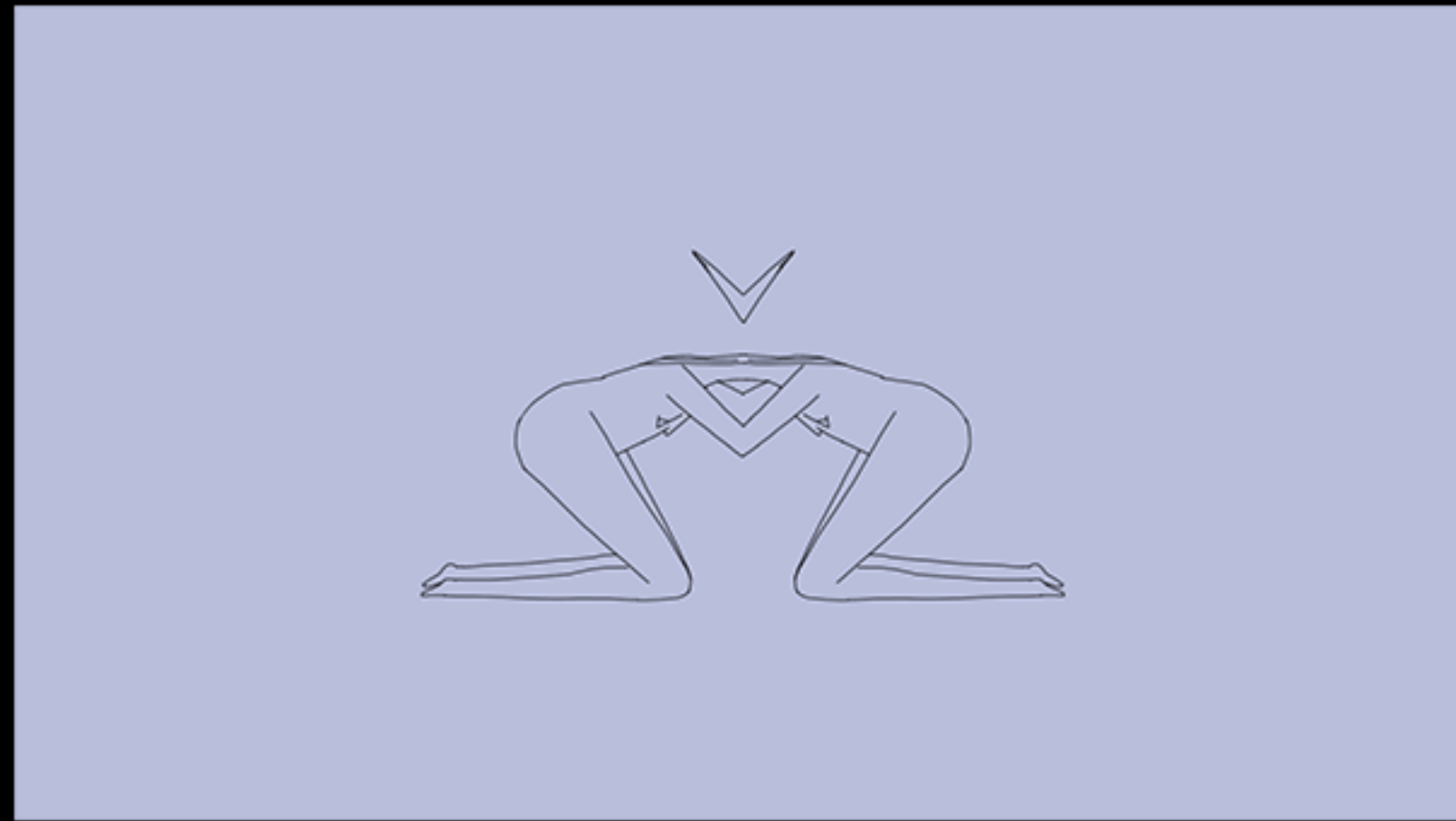
...which travels through and swells their bellies, before pushing downward and outward through the ground, creating a ring of fleshy shapes like a ripple in water.



The Big Mothers lean in close, reaching out as if to test their own reflection in a mirror...

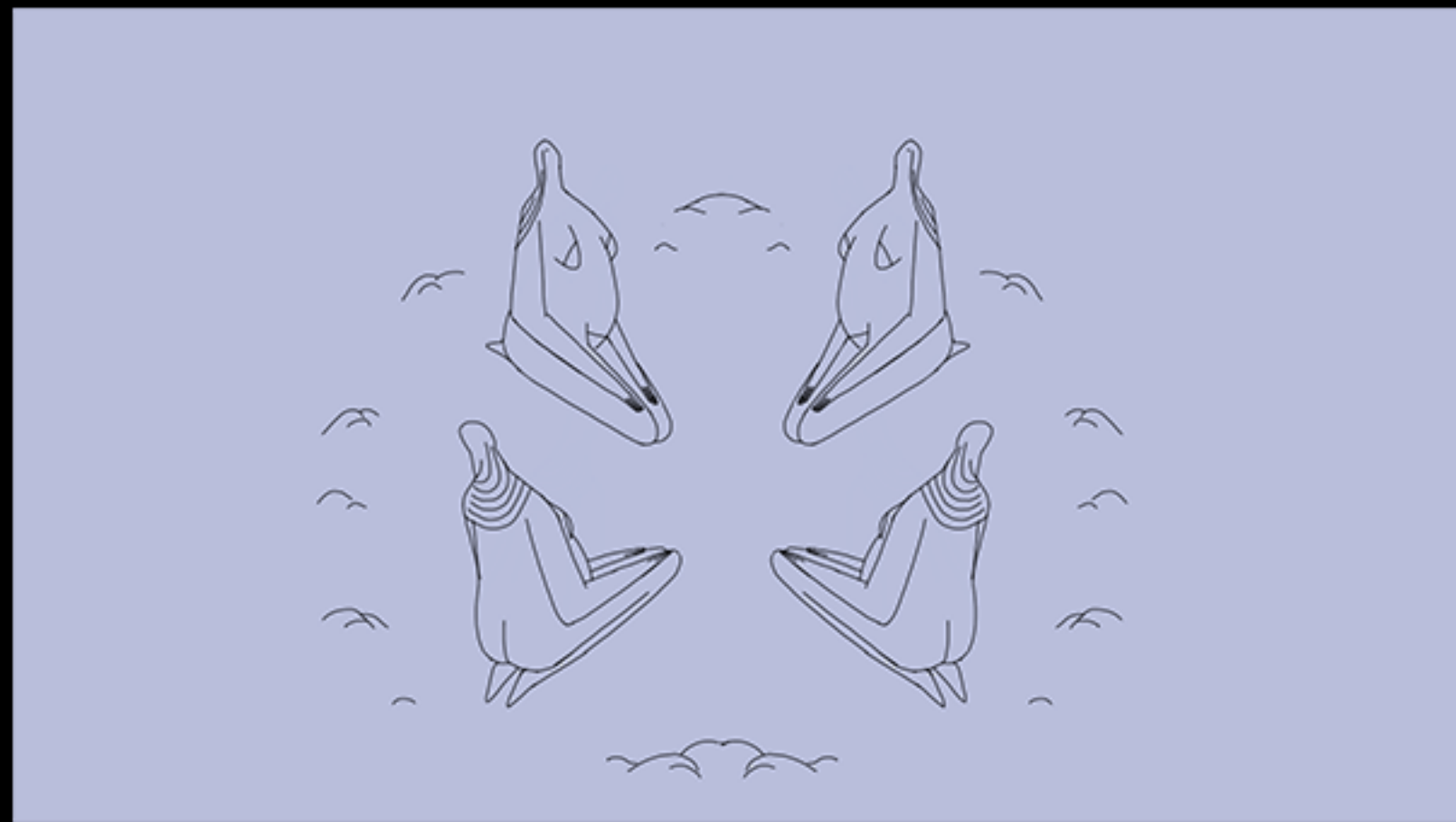
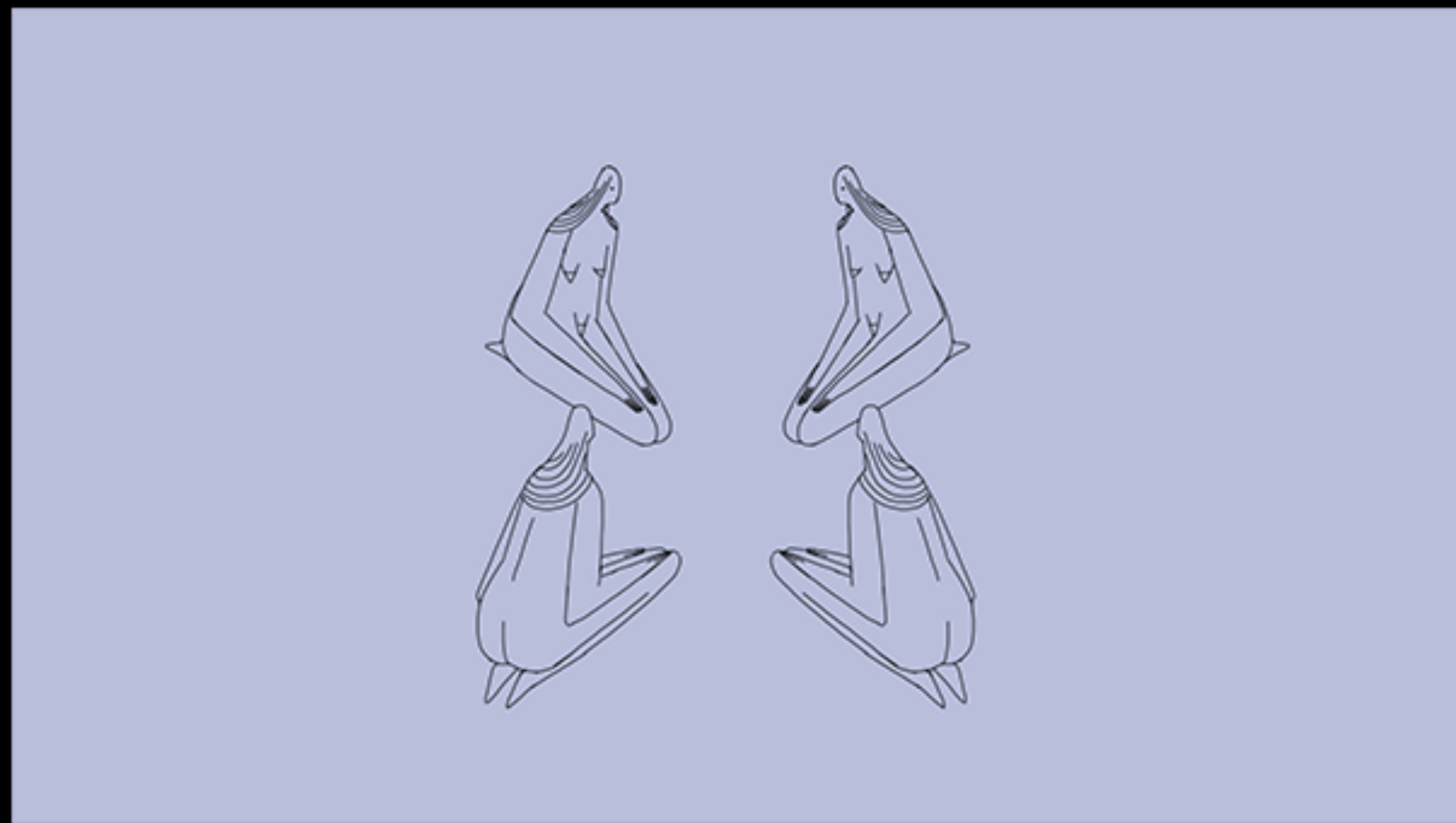
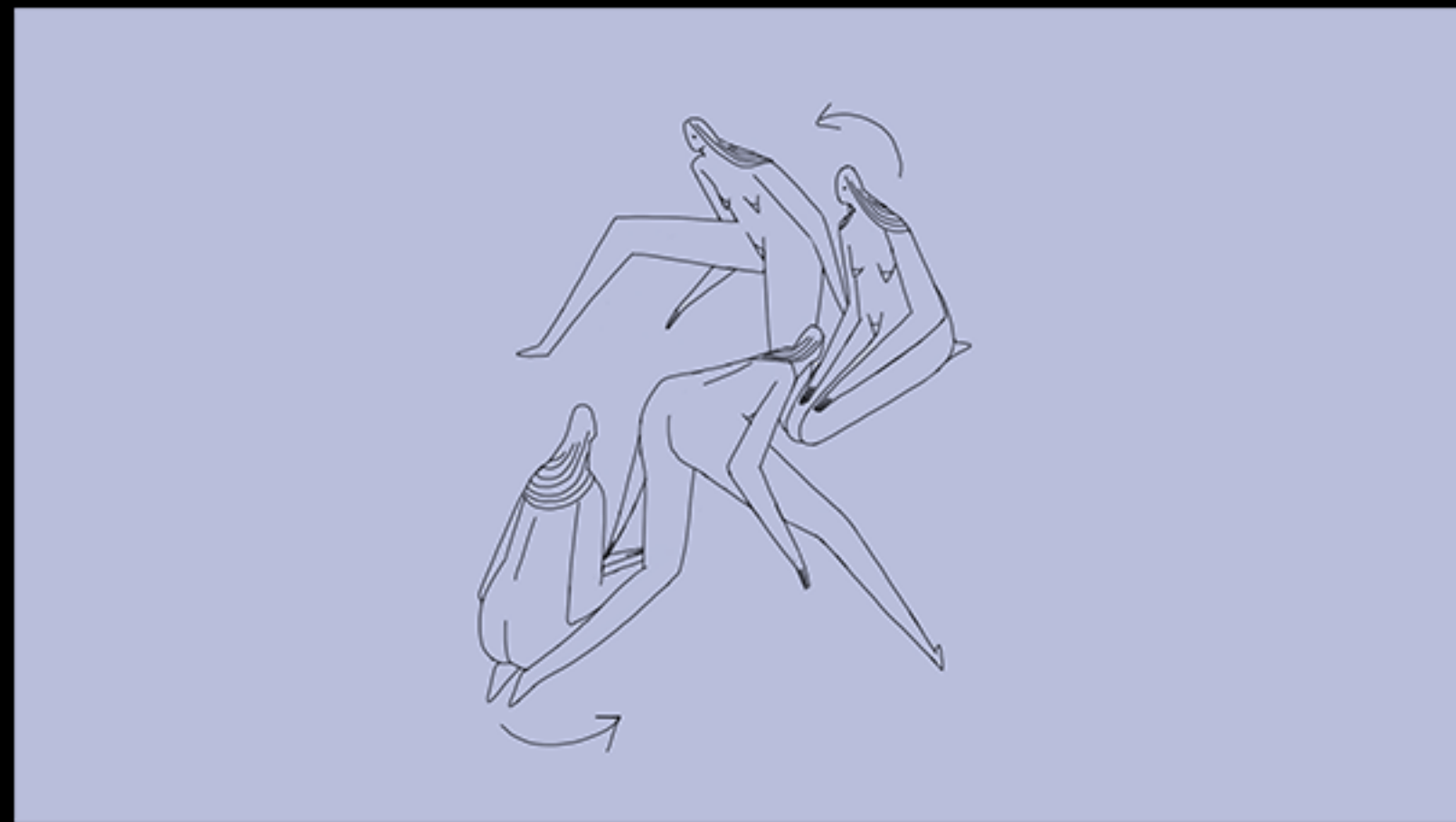


...before pushing through the invisible plane between them, pressing their bodies into strange kaleidoscopic shapes.



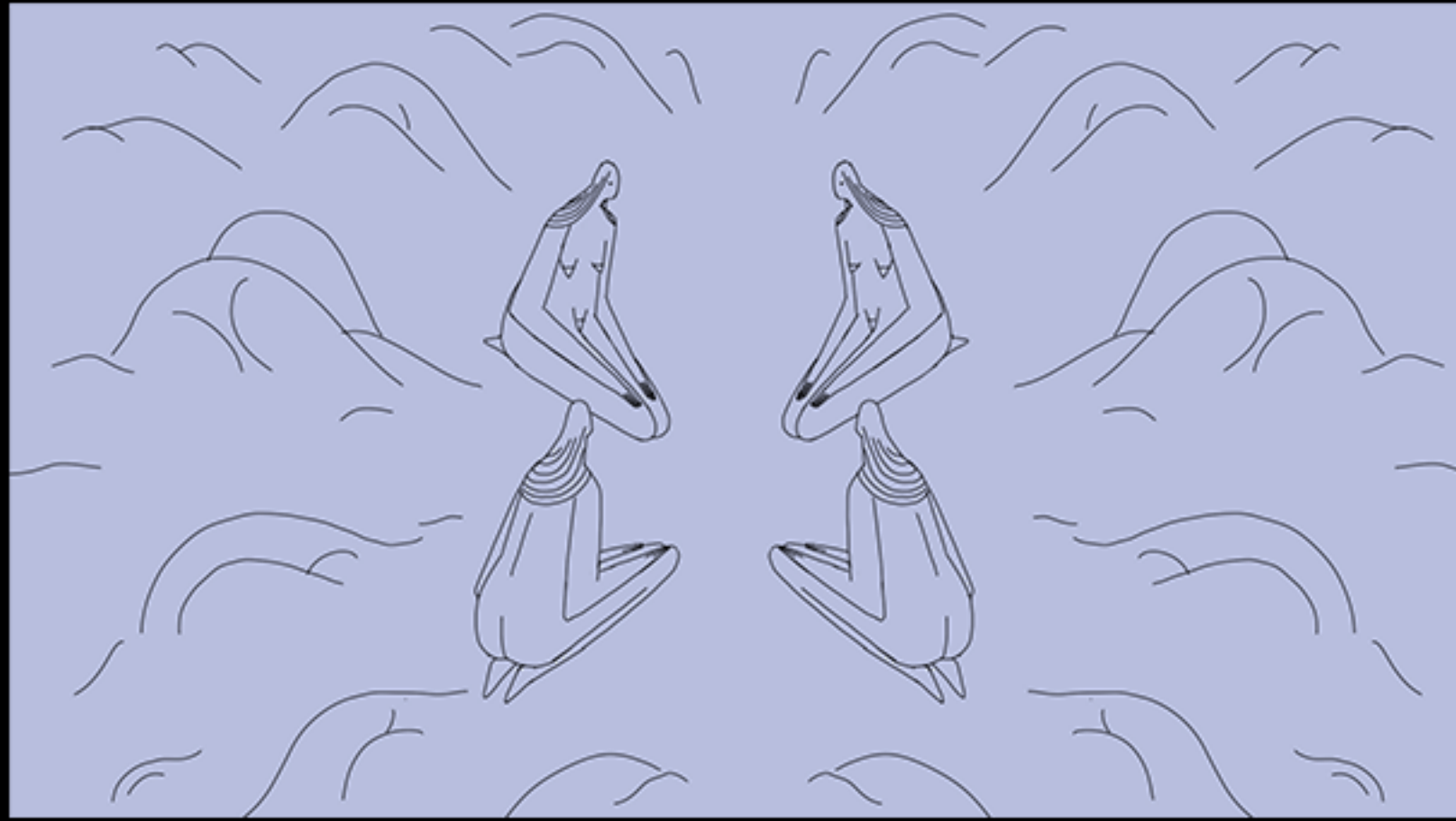
They pull back....

...and so does the camera, spinning 45 degrees.

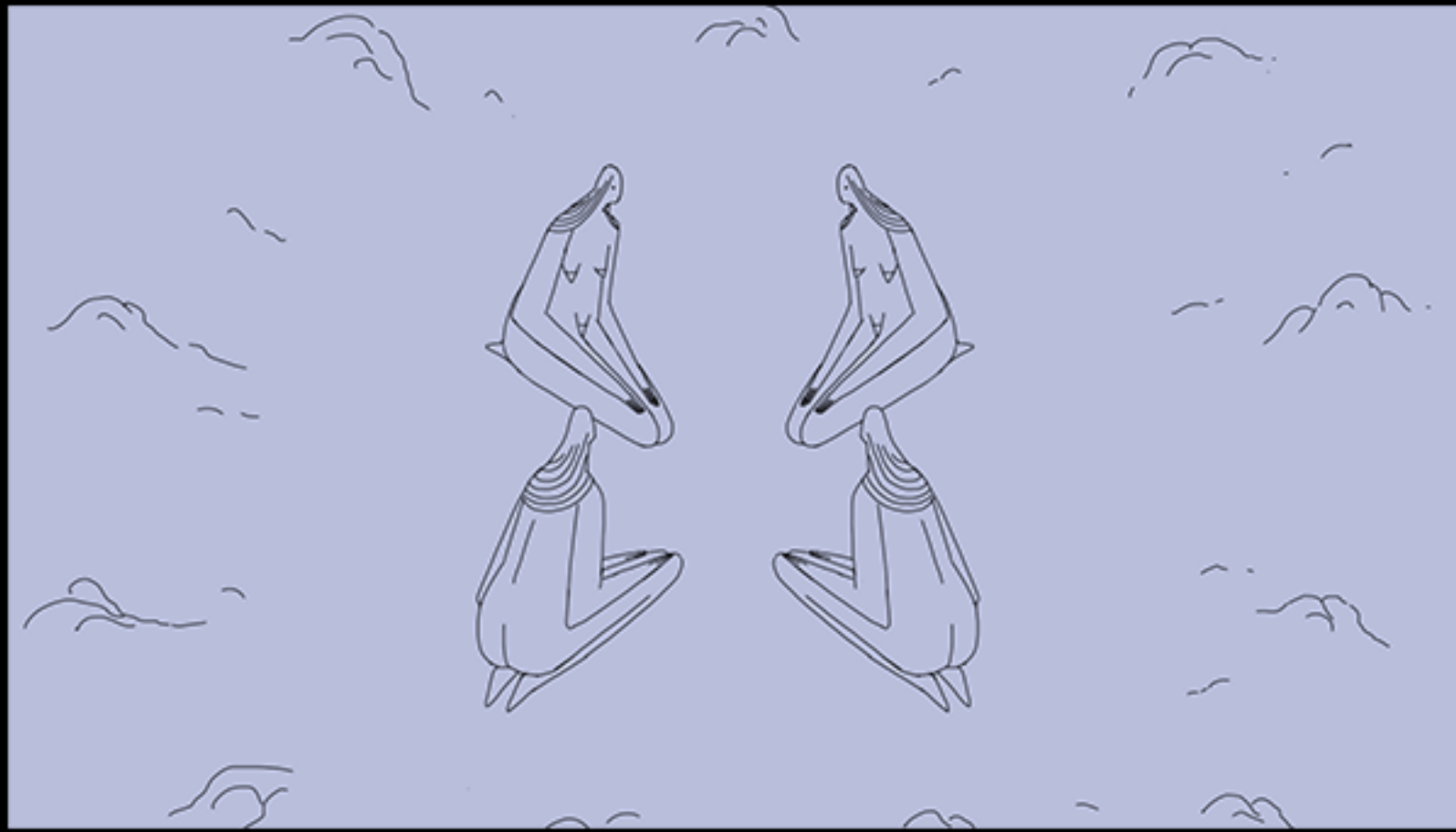


Two more Mothers split off from the first pair, like cells in mitosis, and settle into a circle of four.

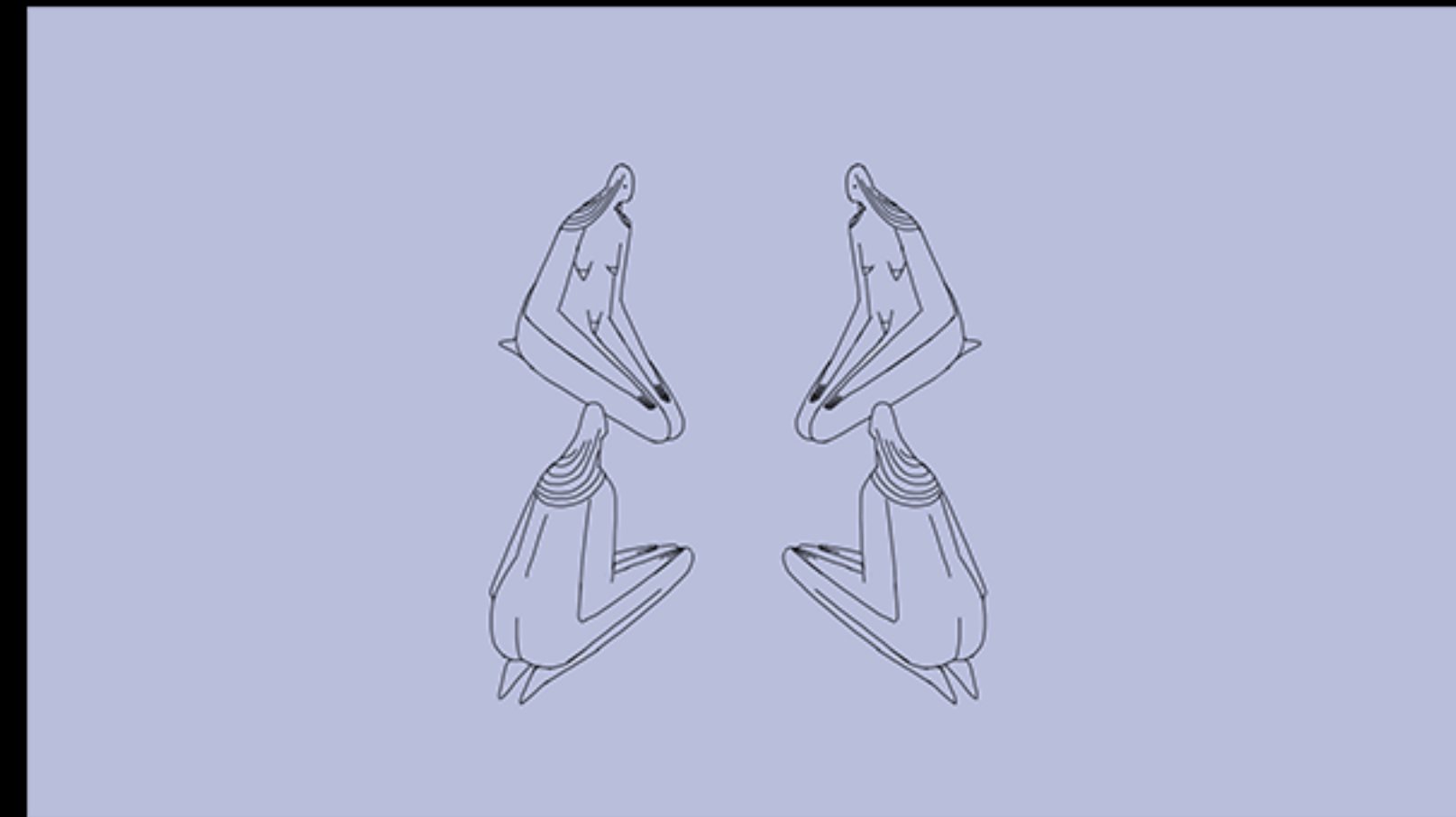
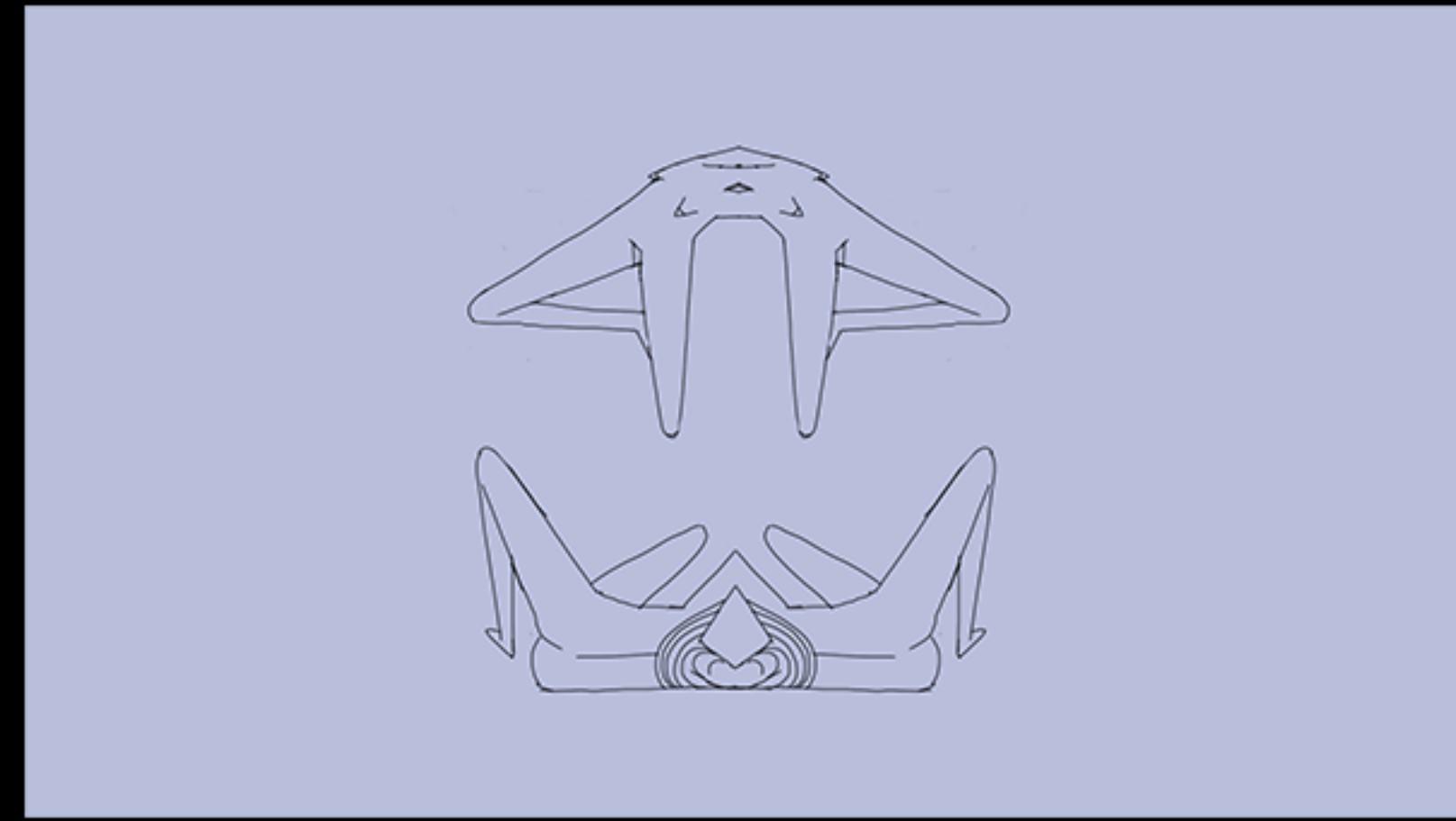
They all take a deep breath in unison...



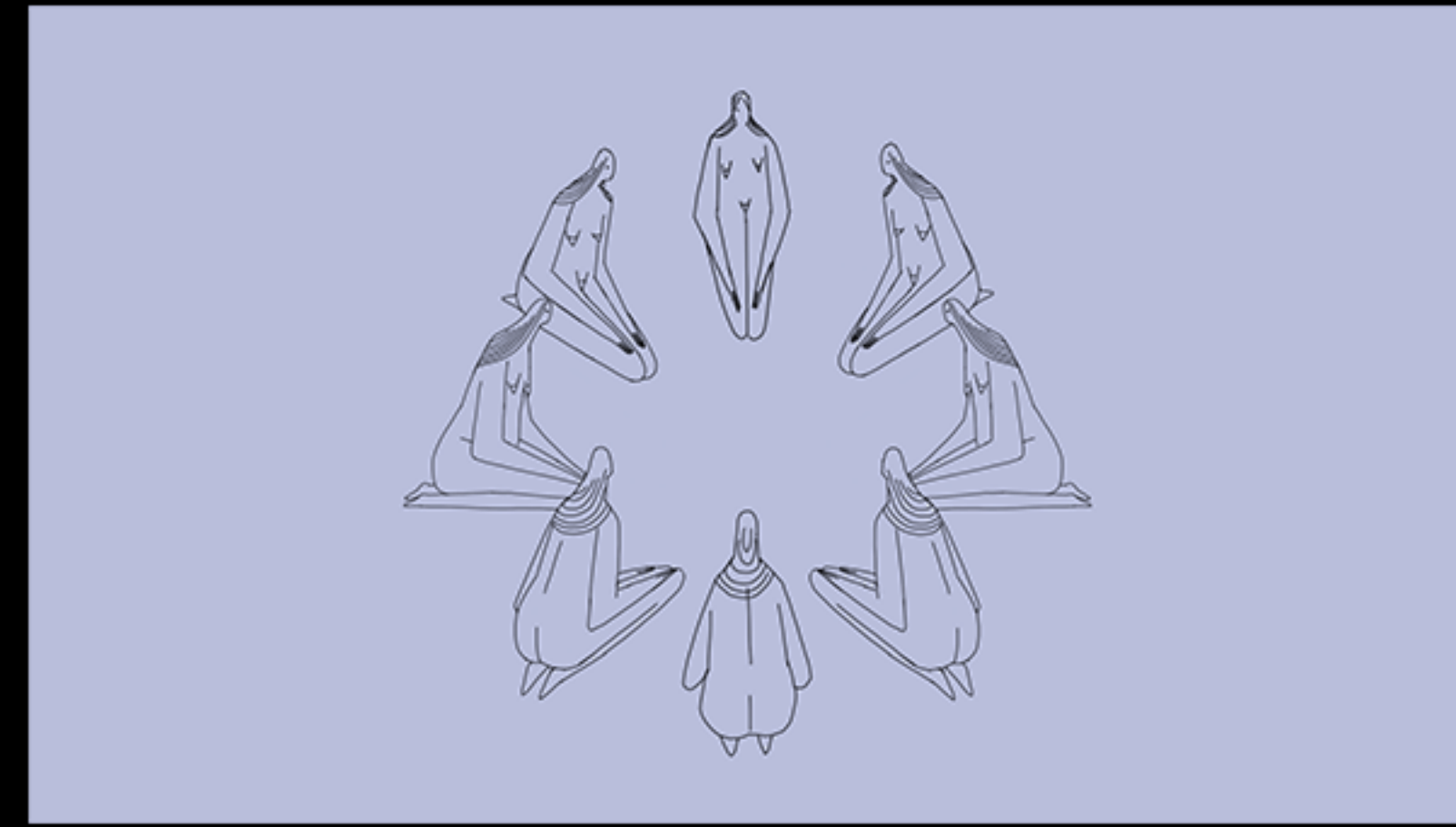
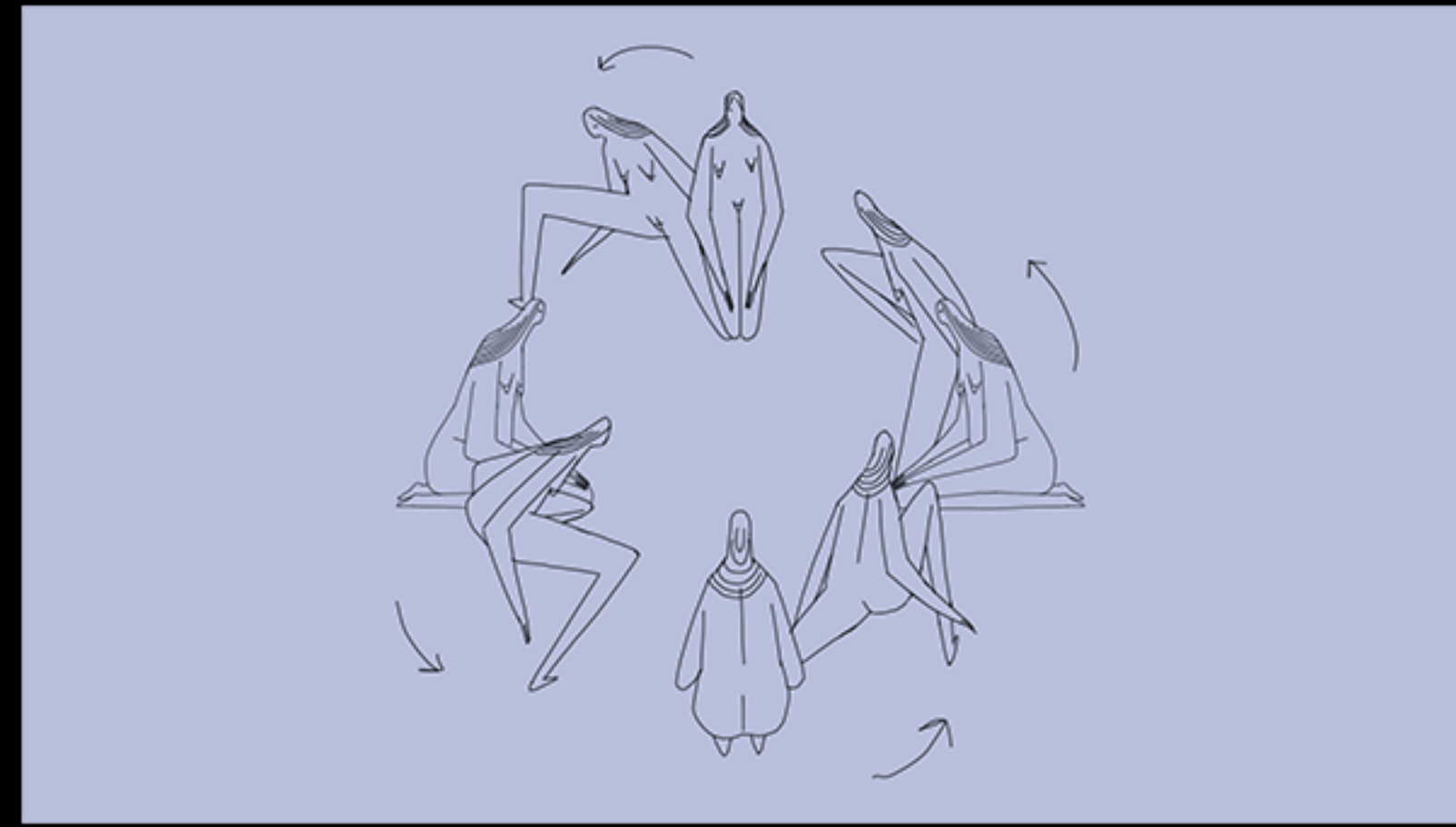
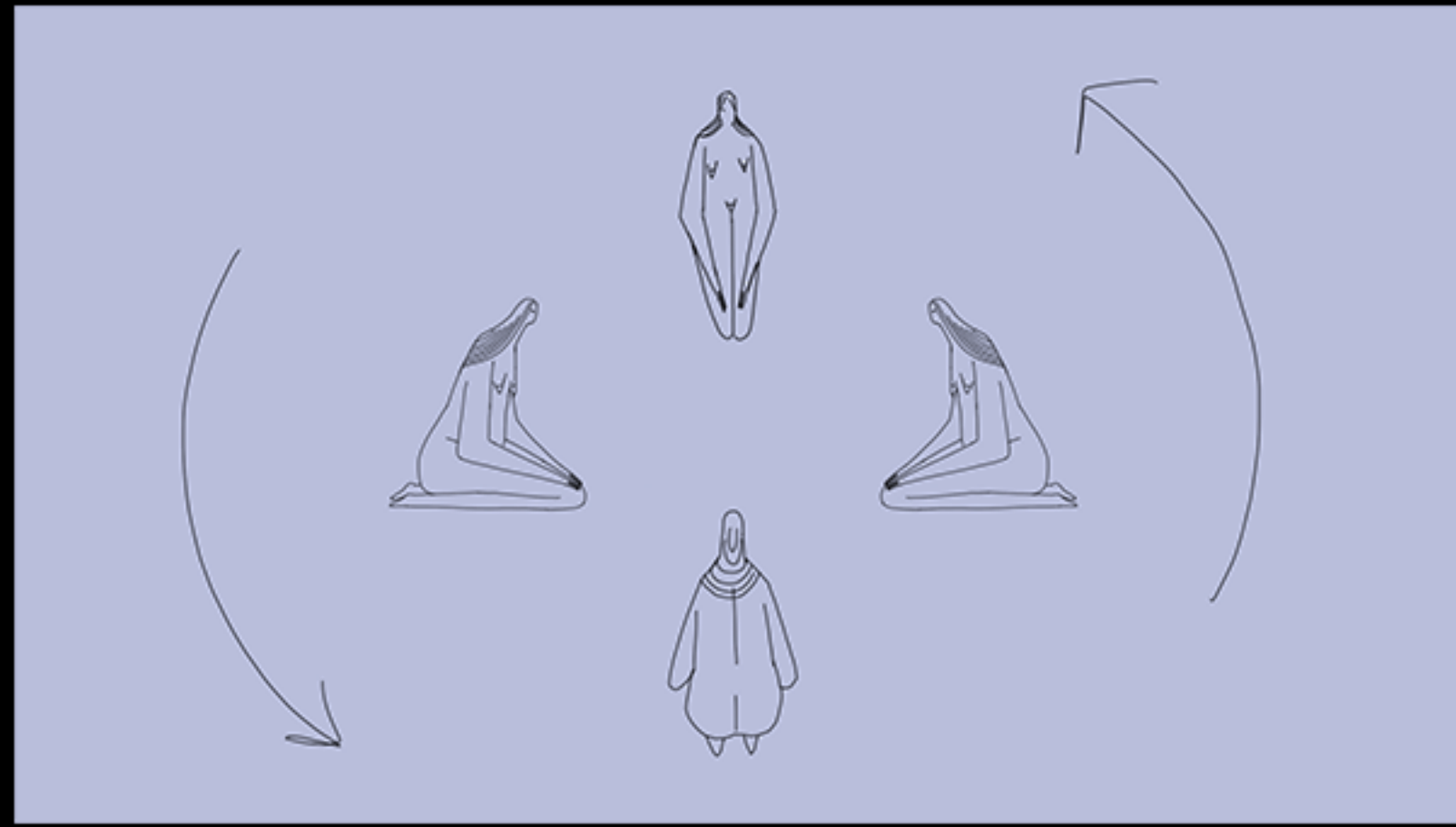
...creating a larger ripple of fleshy shapes, which gently tumble outward.



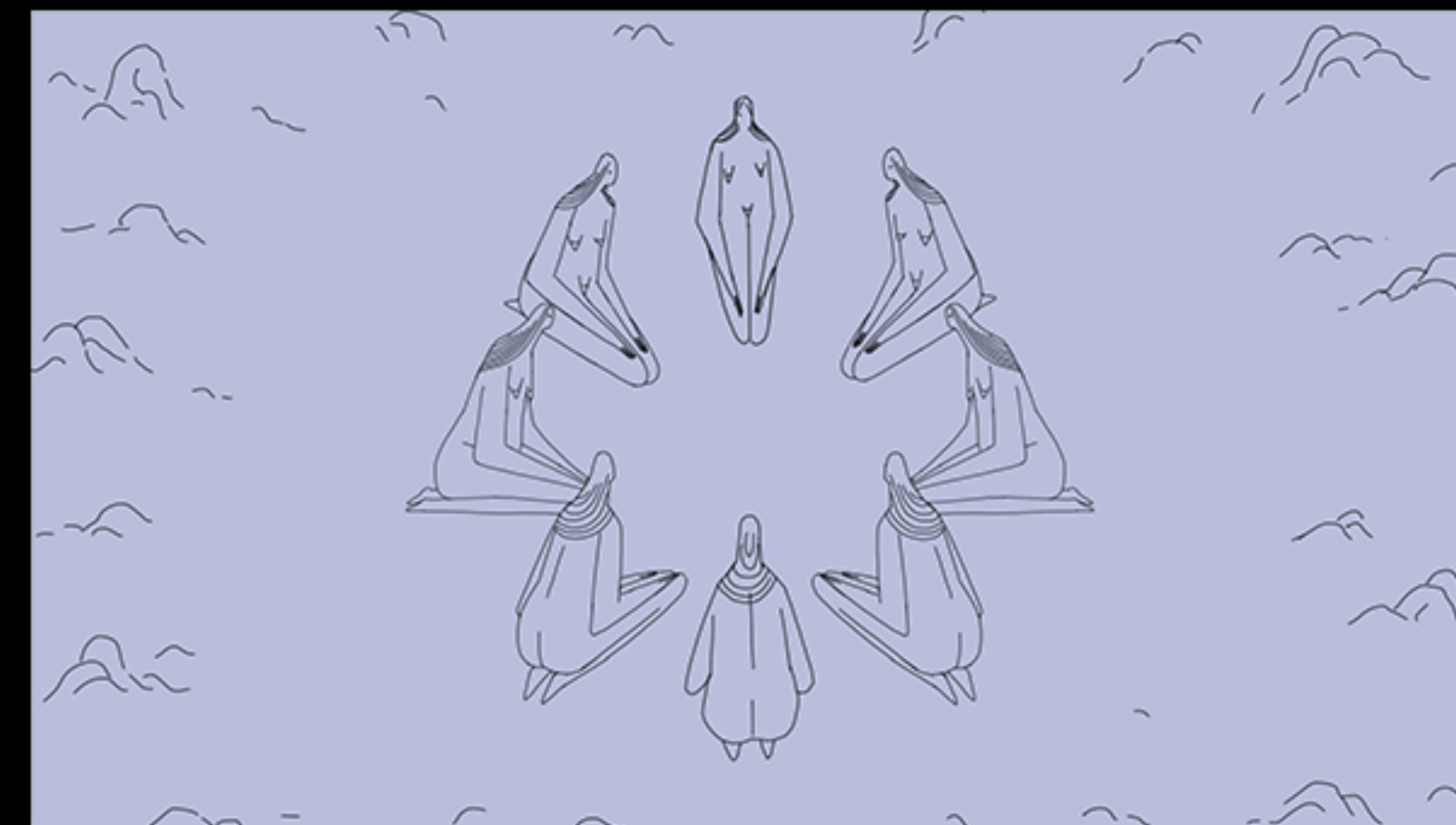
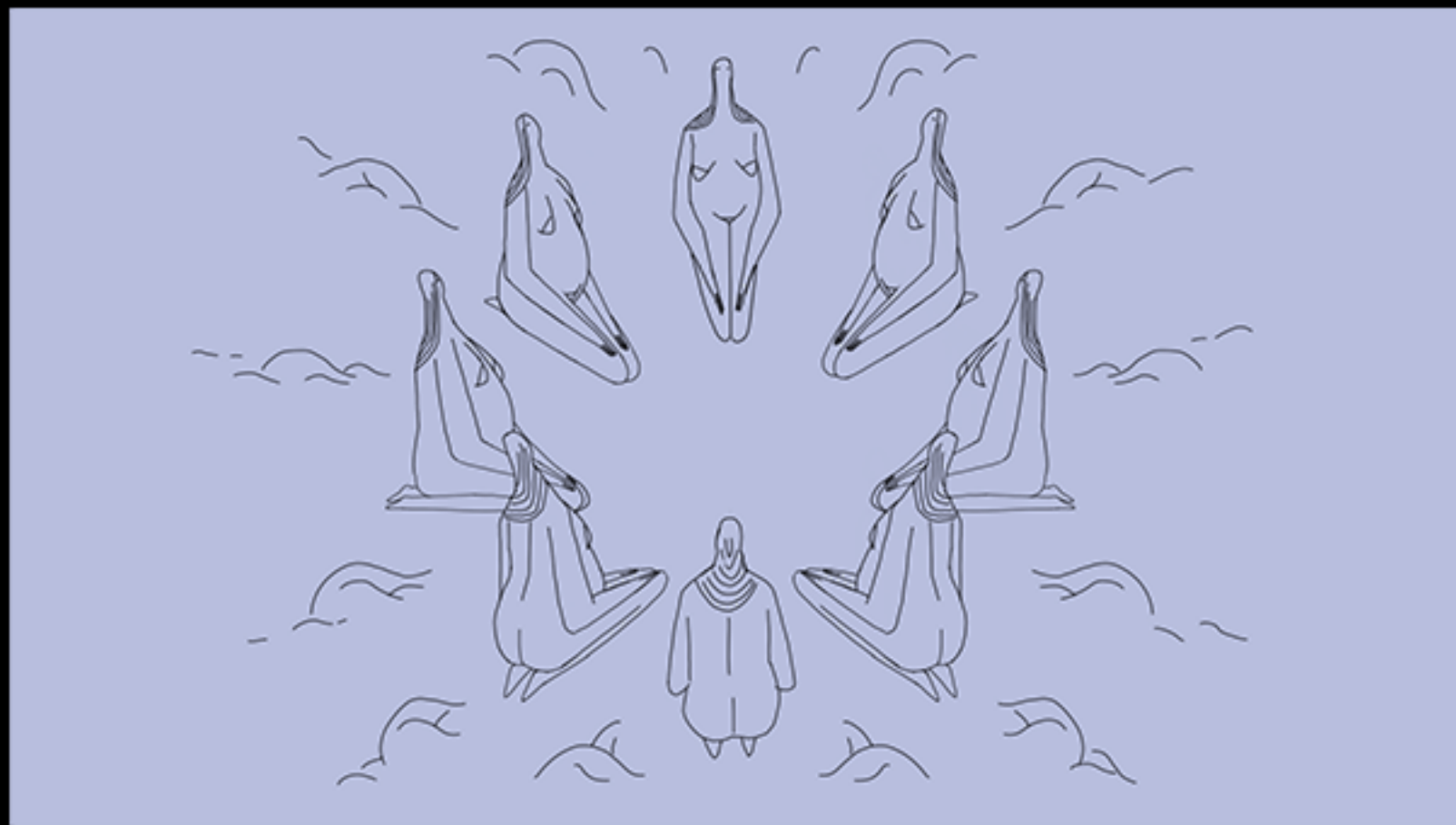
The Mothers again begin the mirror dance, pairing off first in one axis...



...and then another, creating strange and beautiful shapes. (Note: these are representative poses, but the full animation will involve additional/repeating poses.)

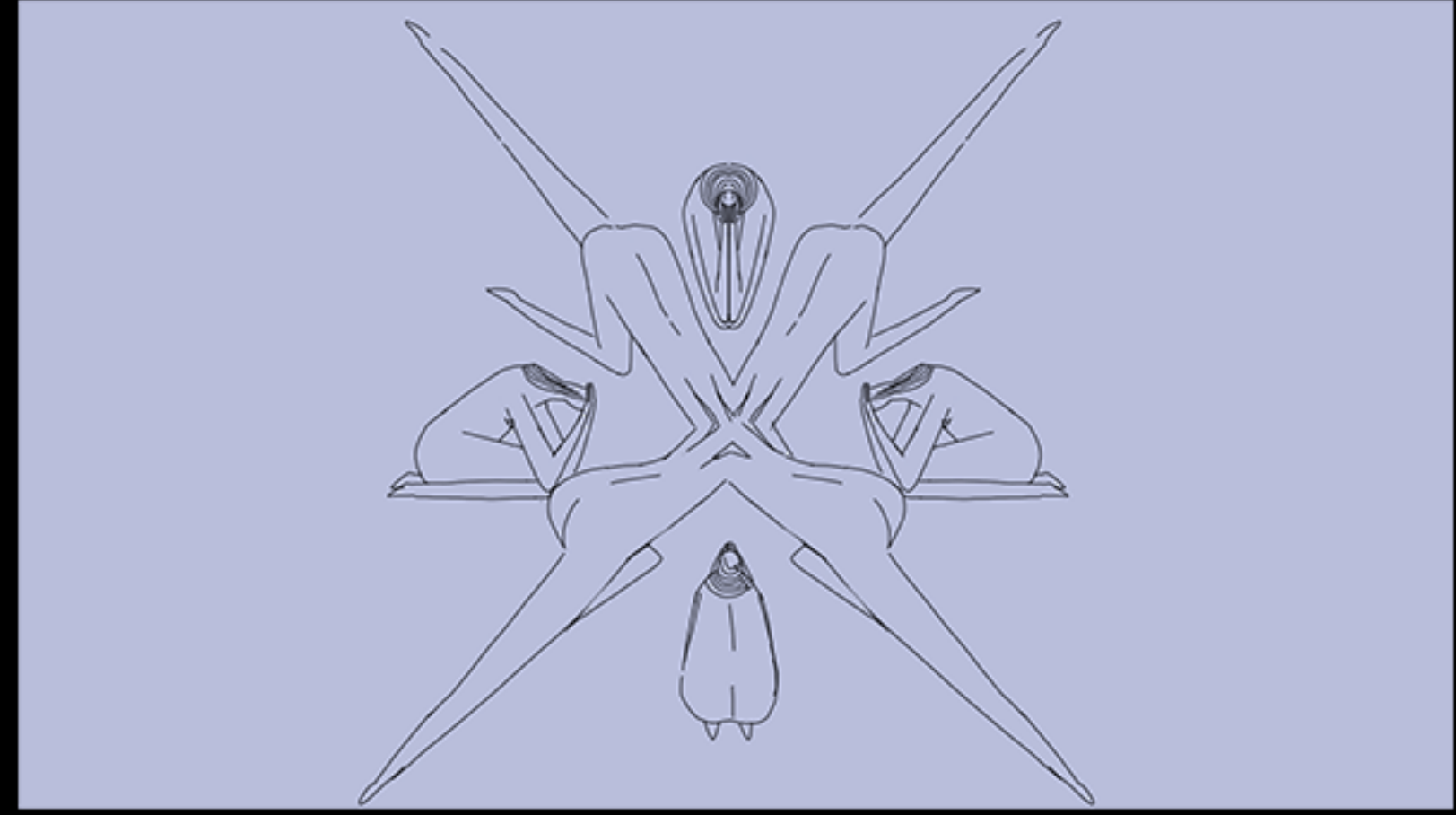
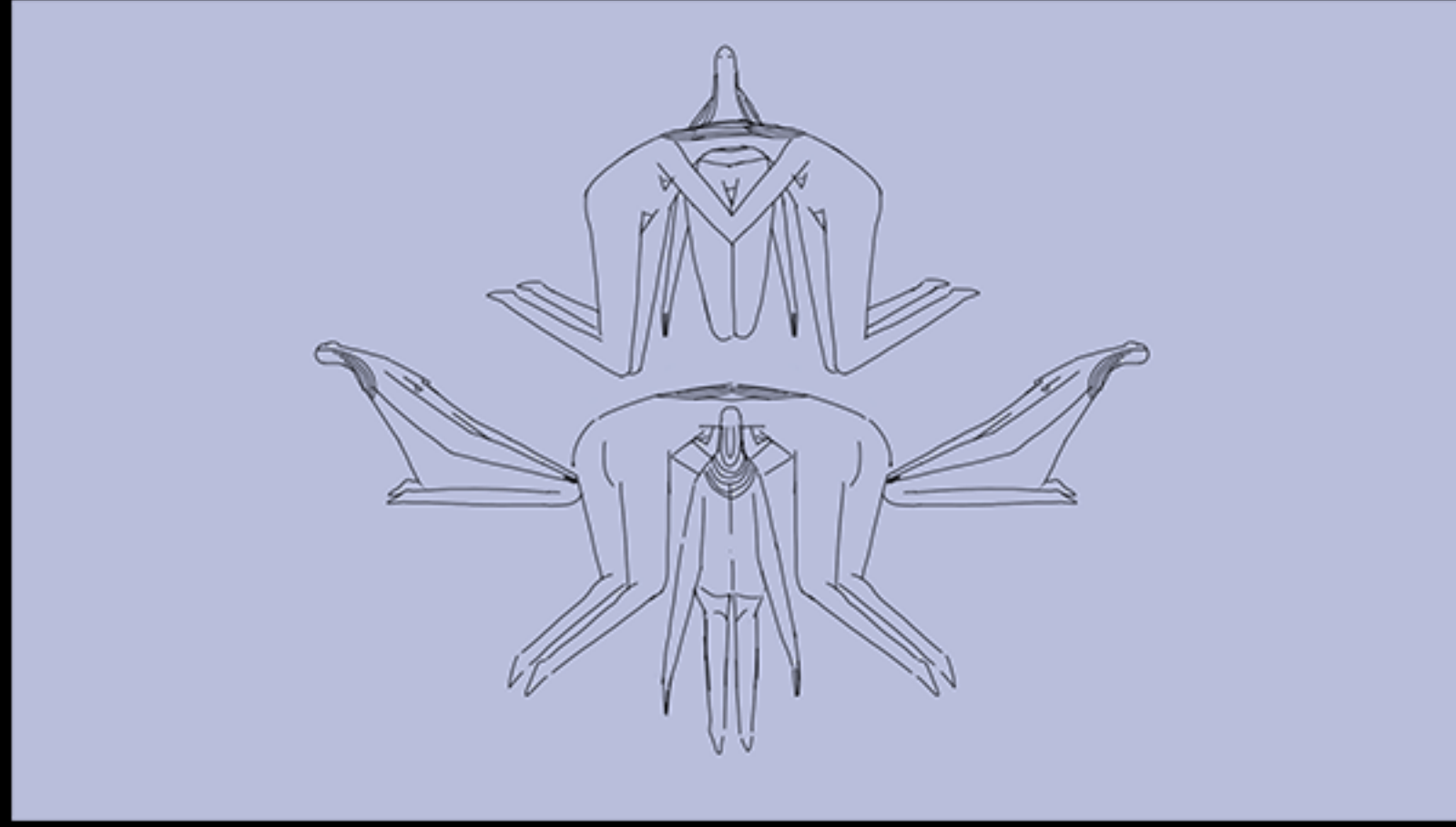


Again the camera pulls back and spins 45 degrees. Four more Mothers divide and split off, settling into a circle of eight.

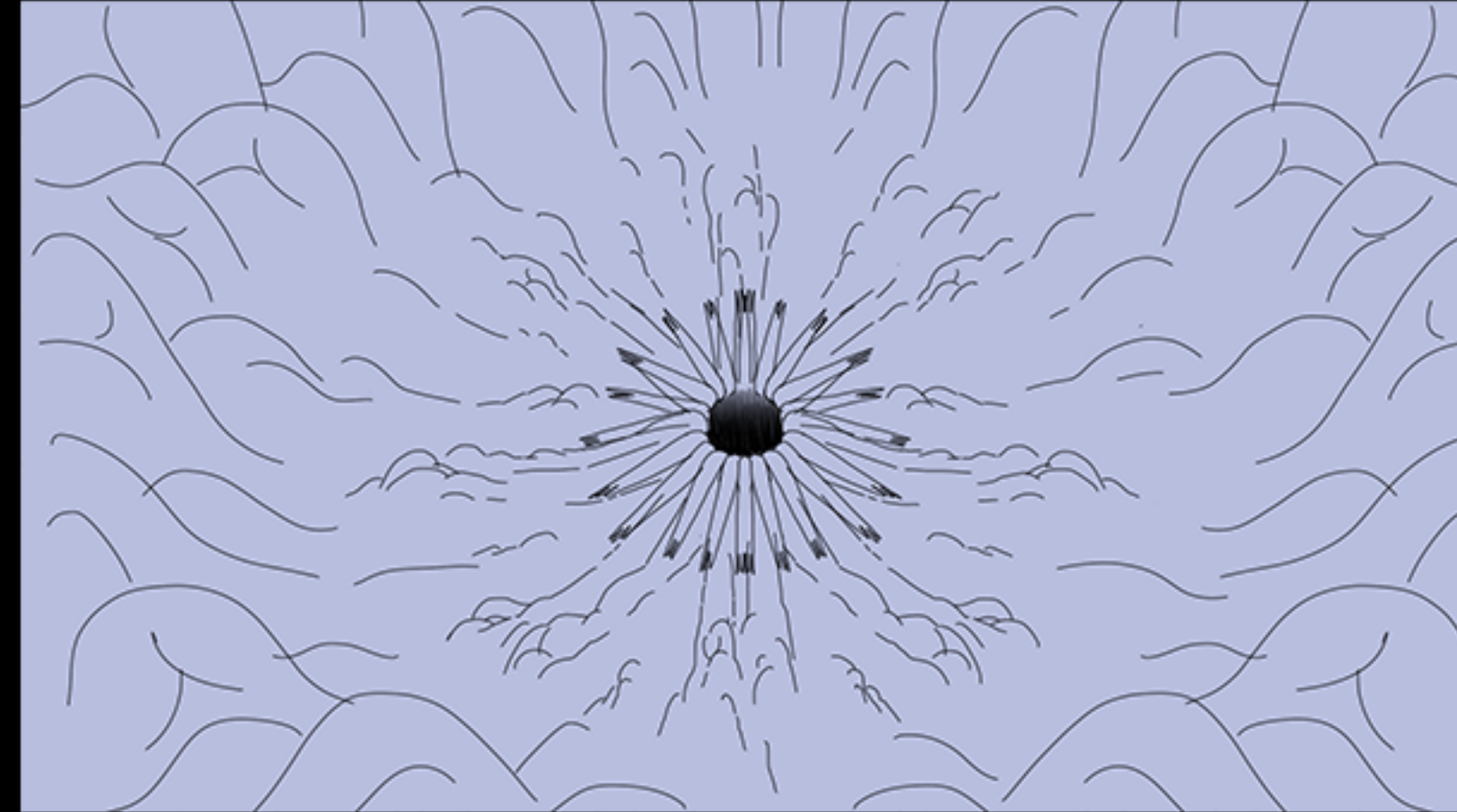
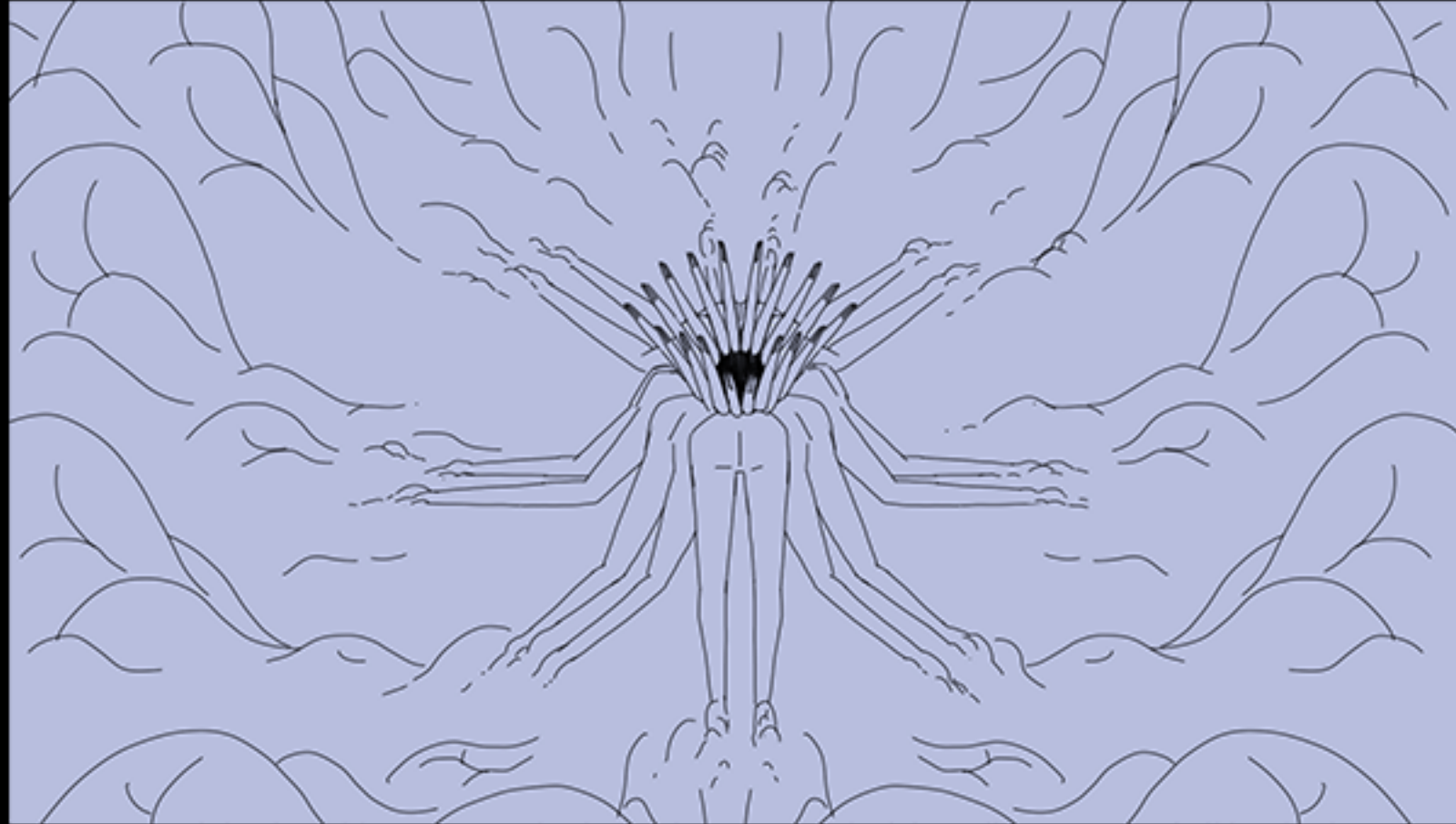
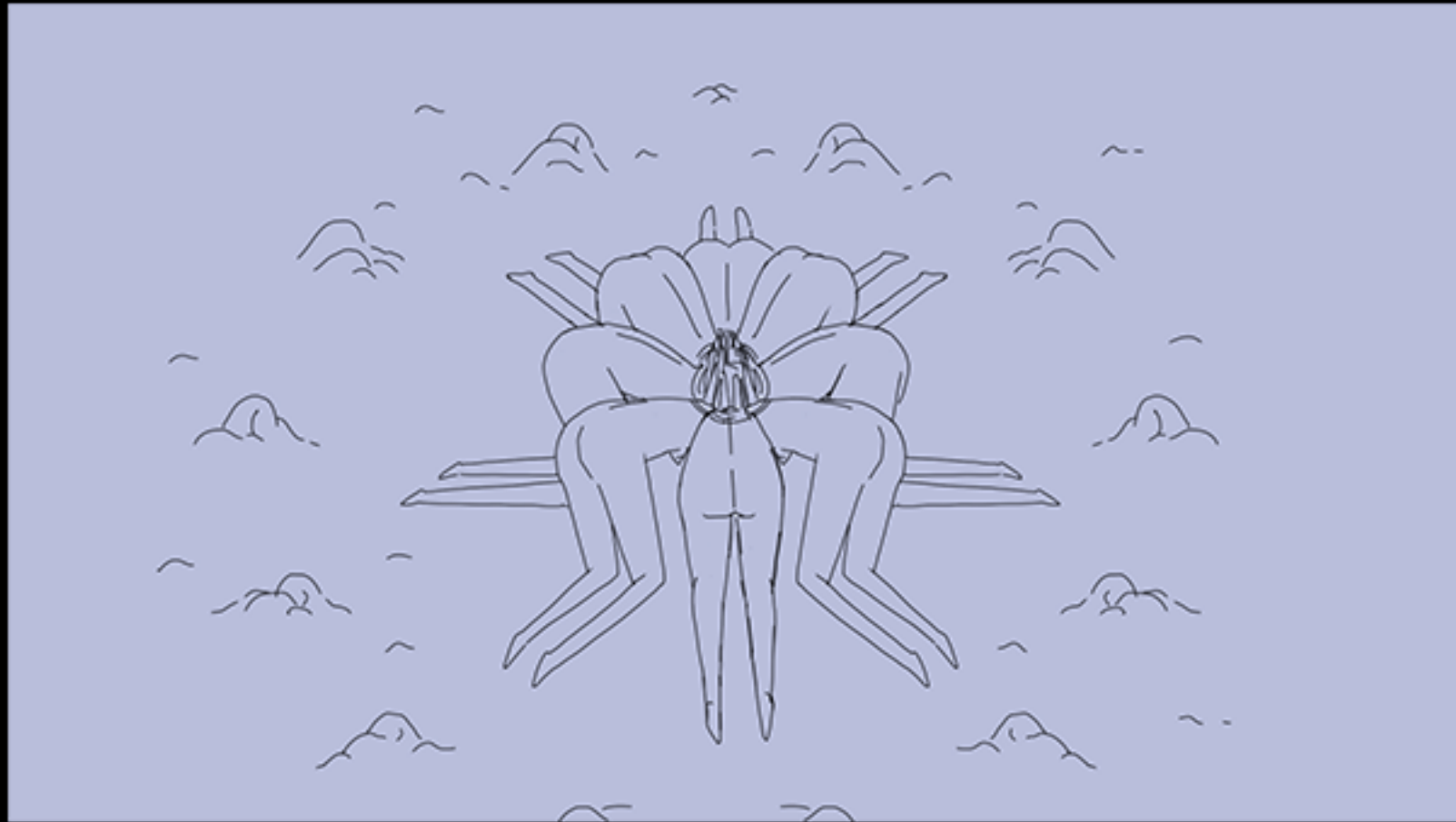


They all take a deep breath, and release an even taller wave of fleshy shapes tumbling outward.

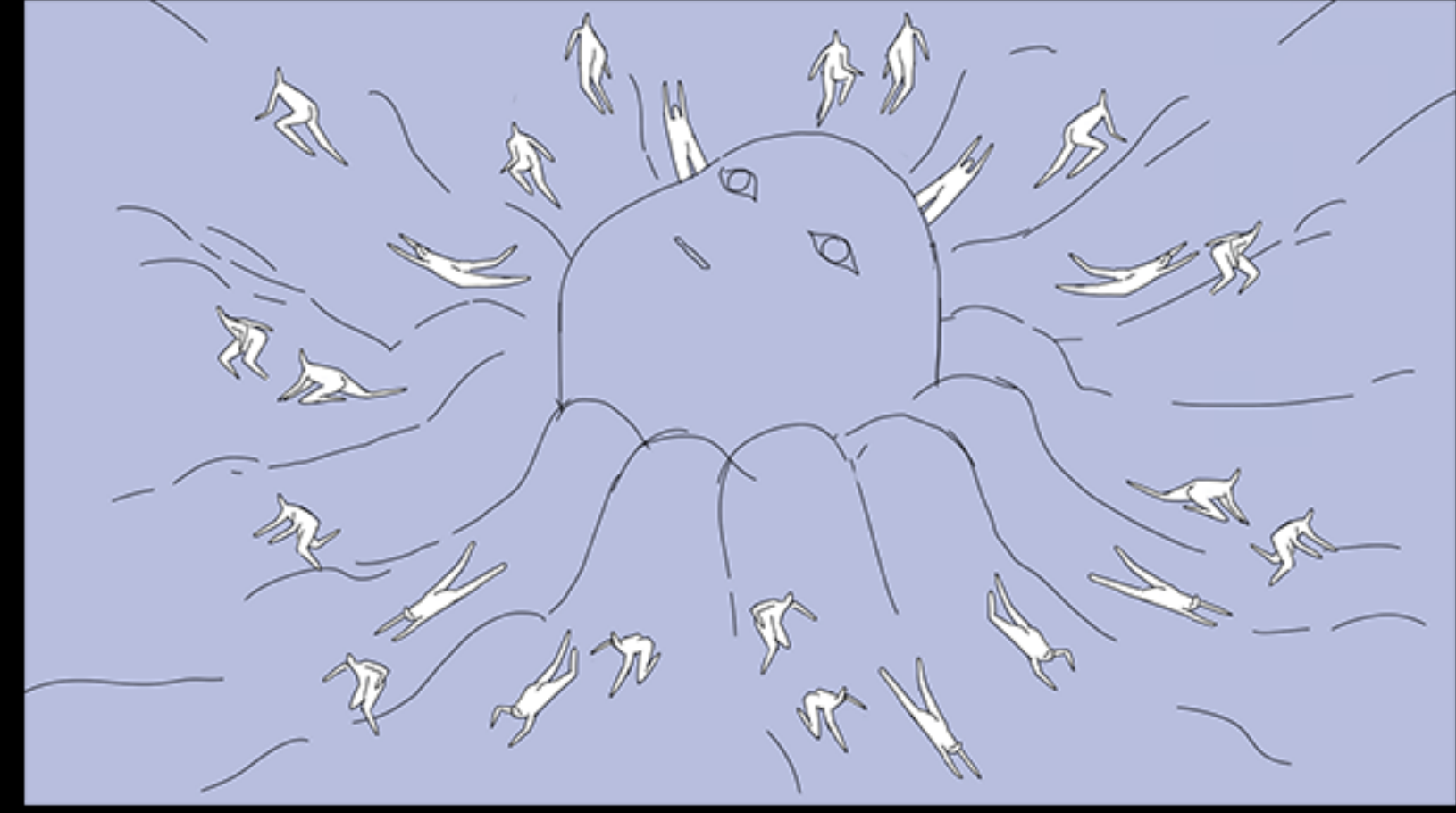
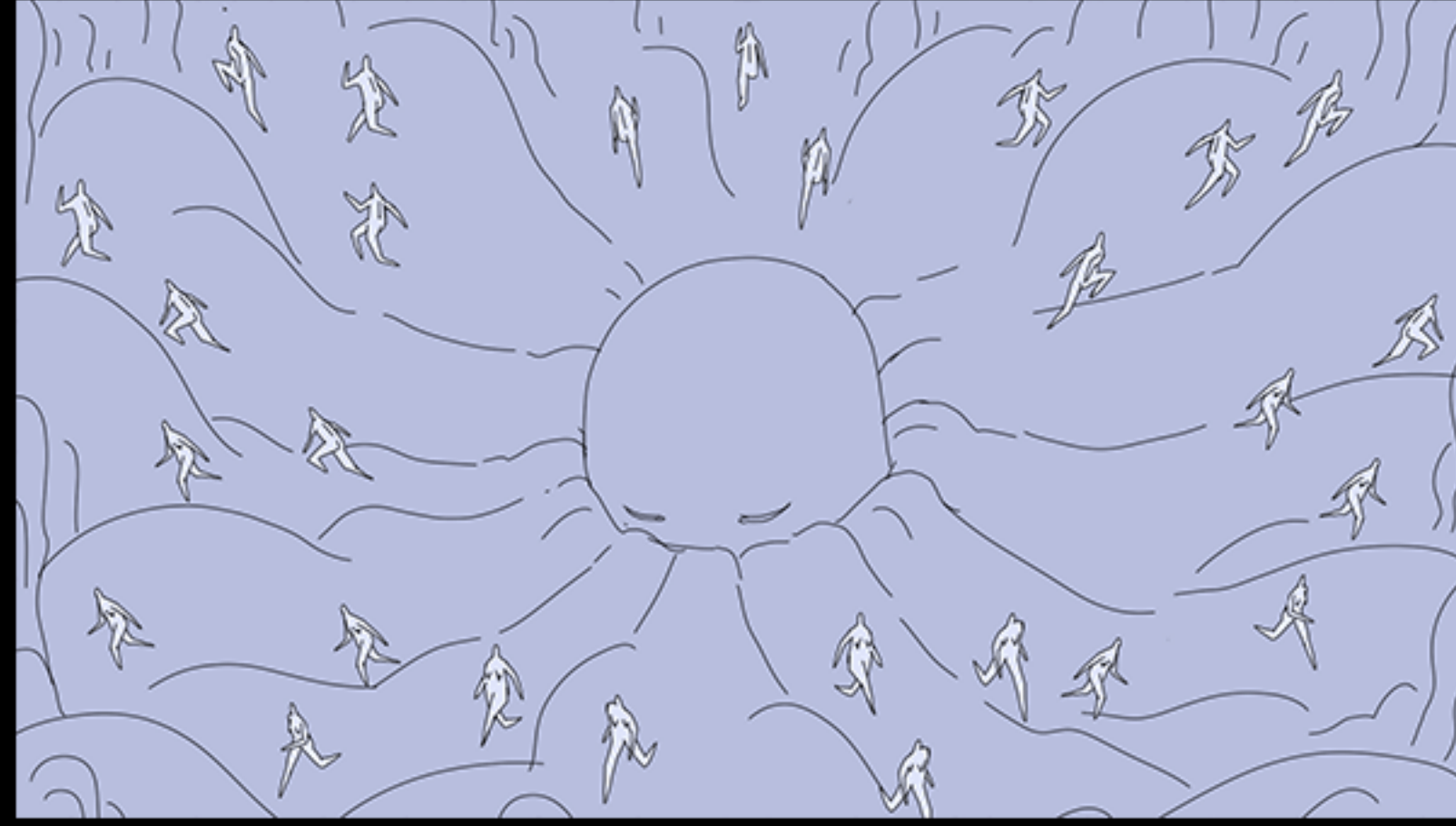
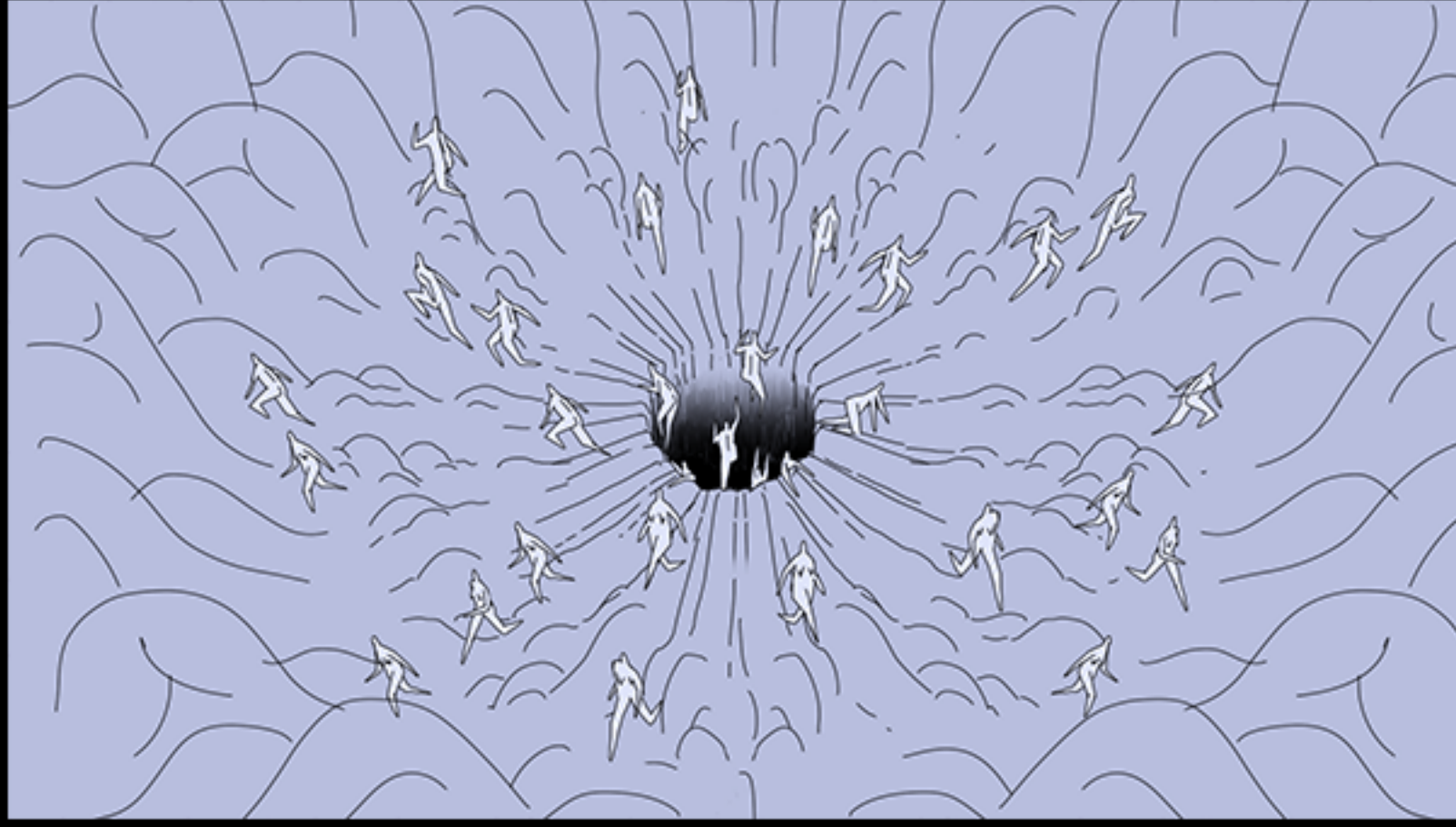




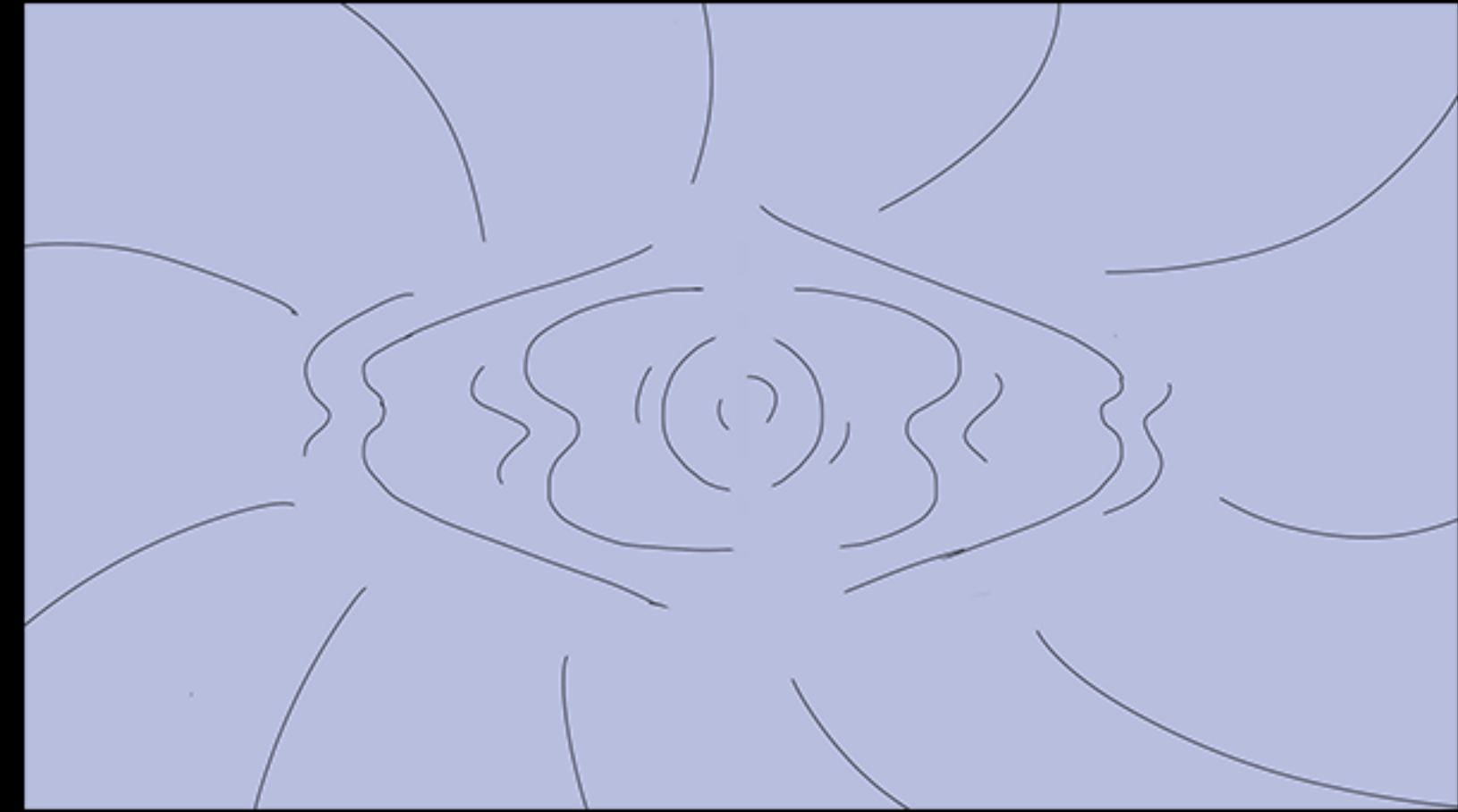
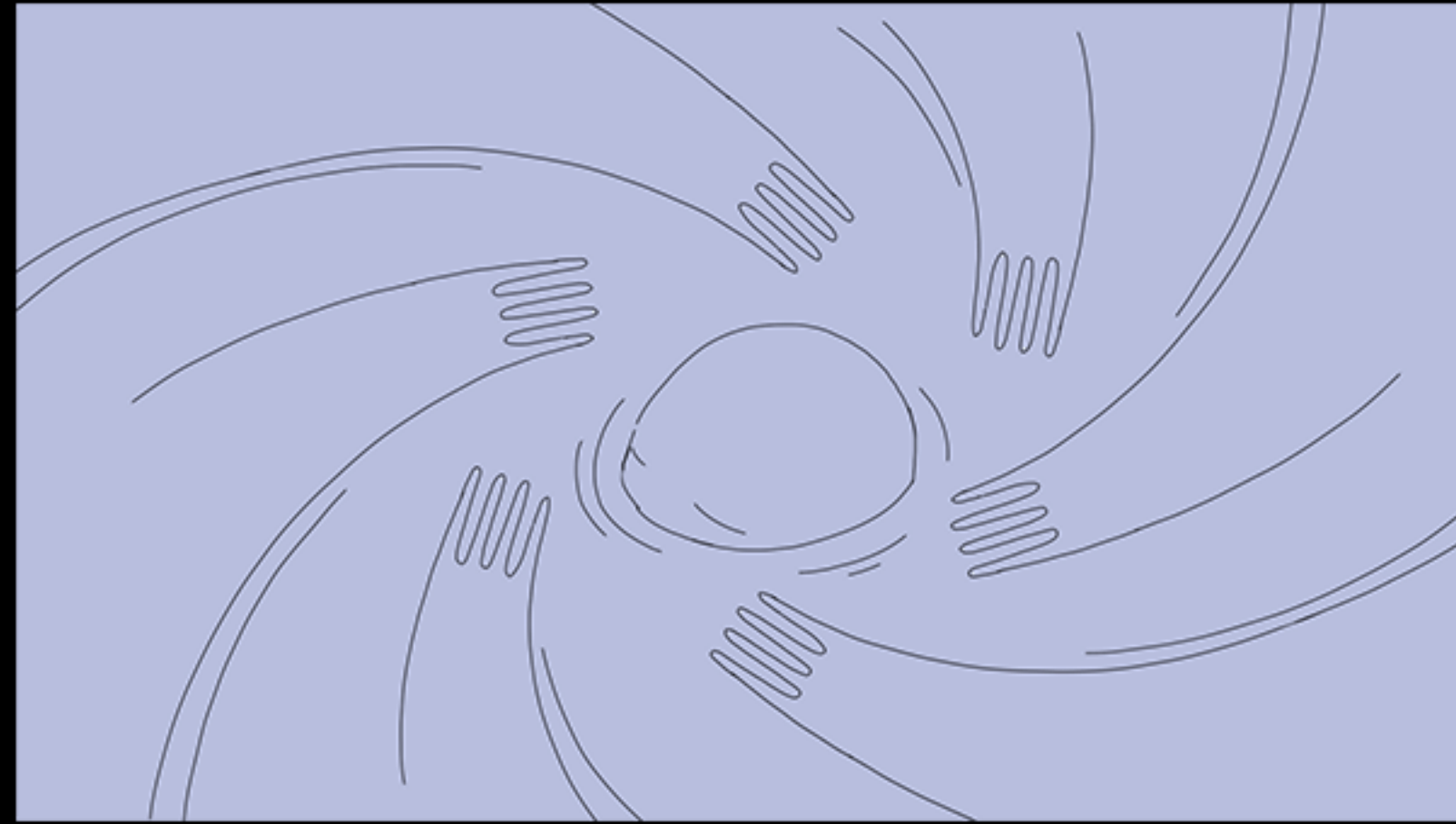
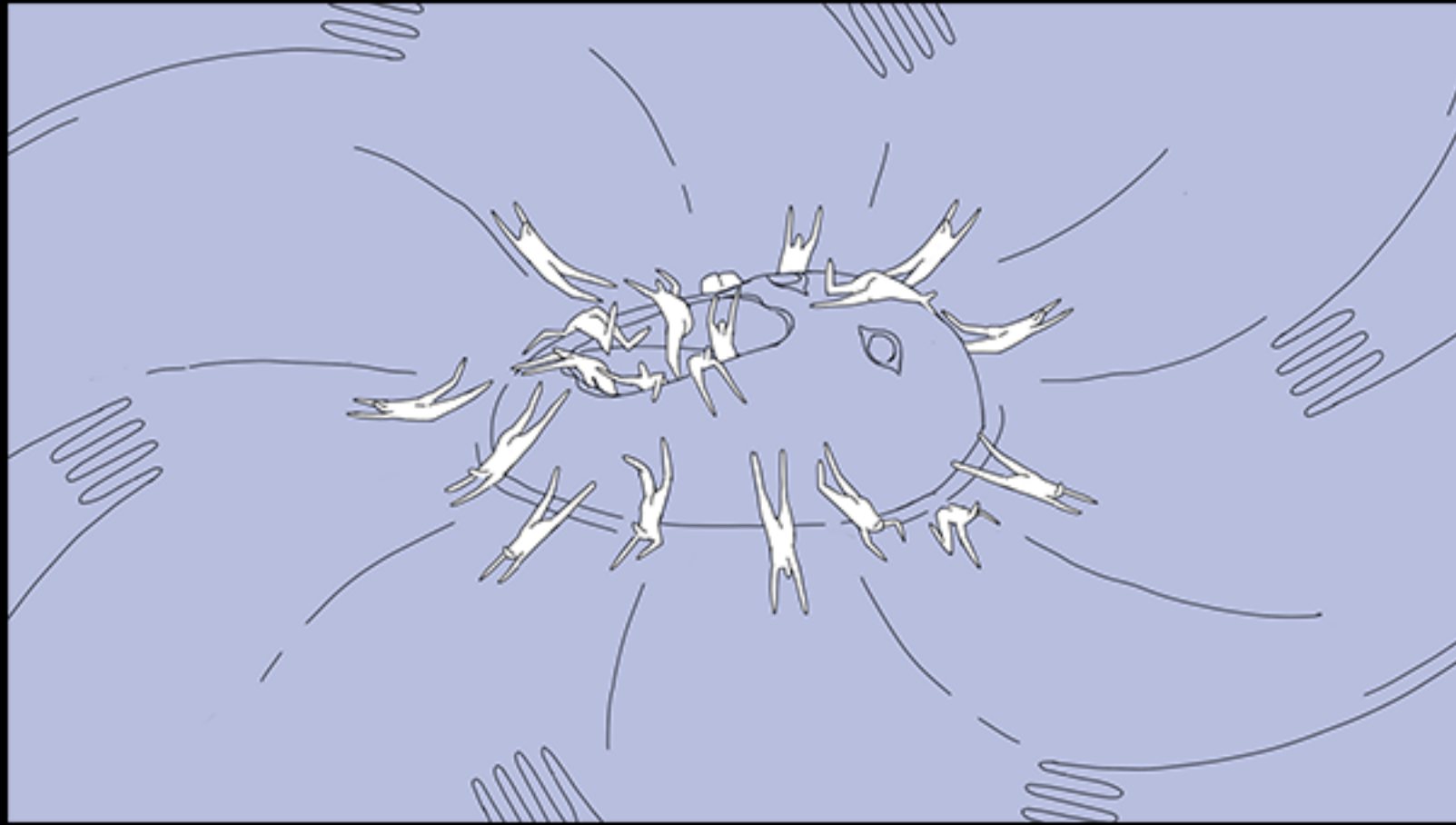
The Mothers begin the mirror dance anew, in pairs and in small groups, mirroring each other across one axis and another. (Note: once again, these are representative poses.)



The Mothers all lean into the center, triggering continuous waves of fleshy shapes. They themselves begin to morph, bodies bleeding into the living, pulsing landscape.



A hole opens in the middle of where the huge figures once were, and little mothers begin to pour out from it. A trickle at first, then flood, spiraling out in all directions. An enormous head crowns, pushing upward and pulling the fleshy landscape up with it like a collar. The little mothers are pulled with it back toward the center.



The huge face yawns open, sucking the tiny figures into its gaping mouth as a spiral of huge hands push the little mothers toward the center. The head and hands spiral inward, collapsing into a ripple of abstracted, animating shapes. This kicks off a sequence of abstract animation, which transitions into the next scene.

*(End of excerpt)*



thank yOu

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